ABC

delicious.

cafe food

42 ESSENTIAL NEW RECIPES
FROM OUR FAVOURITE CAFES

IN ASSOCIATION WITH LAVAZZA Vetta

If you thought all spaghetti tasted the same, we invite you to think again. In the June 2005 edition of *Choice* magazine, 700 people put 26 brands to the test and chose Vetta as their number one preference – hardly surprising as Vetta makes four of the top eight pasta brands. Is it the highest quality Australian durum wheat, or our Italian expertise refined over generations? We can't be sure, but there's no denying we've started a whole new tradition in Australia for the unmistakable taste of Vetta pasta.

- MADE FROM PREMIUM AUSTRALIAN DURUM WHEAT
- CONVENIENT FOODSERVICE PACK SIZES
- RESTAURANT APPROVED QUALITY
- HALAL APPROVED

PENNE PASTA WITH GREEN CHILLI, SPICED PUMPKIN SEEDS AND BACON

Ingredients

500gm Vetta Penne Pasta No.33
180g white mushrooms
1 clove garlic
150mls cream
Green chilli
2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds
4 rashers bacon
1 bunch fresh chives
Sea salt
Black pepper
Hot paprika pepper
Olive oil

For the bacon

In a fry pan add a little olive oil, fry the bacon until it begins to crisp, then add the pumpkin seeds and fry together, season with freshly milled black pepper and a little hot paprika pepper.

For the mushrooms

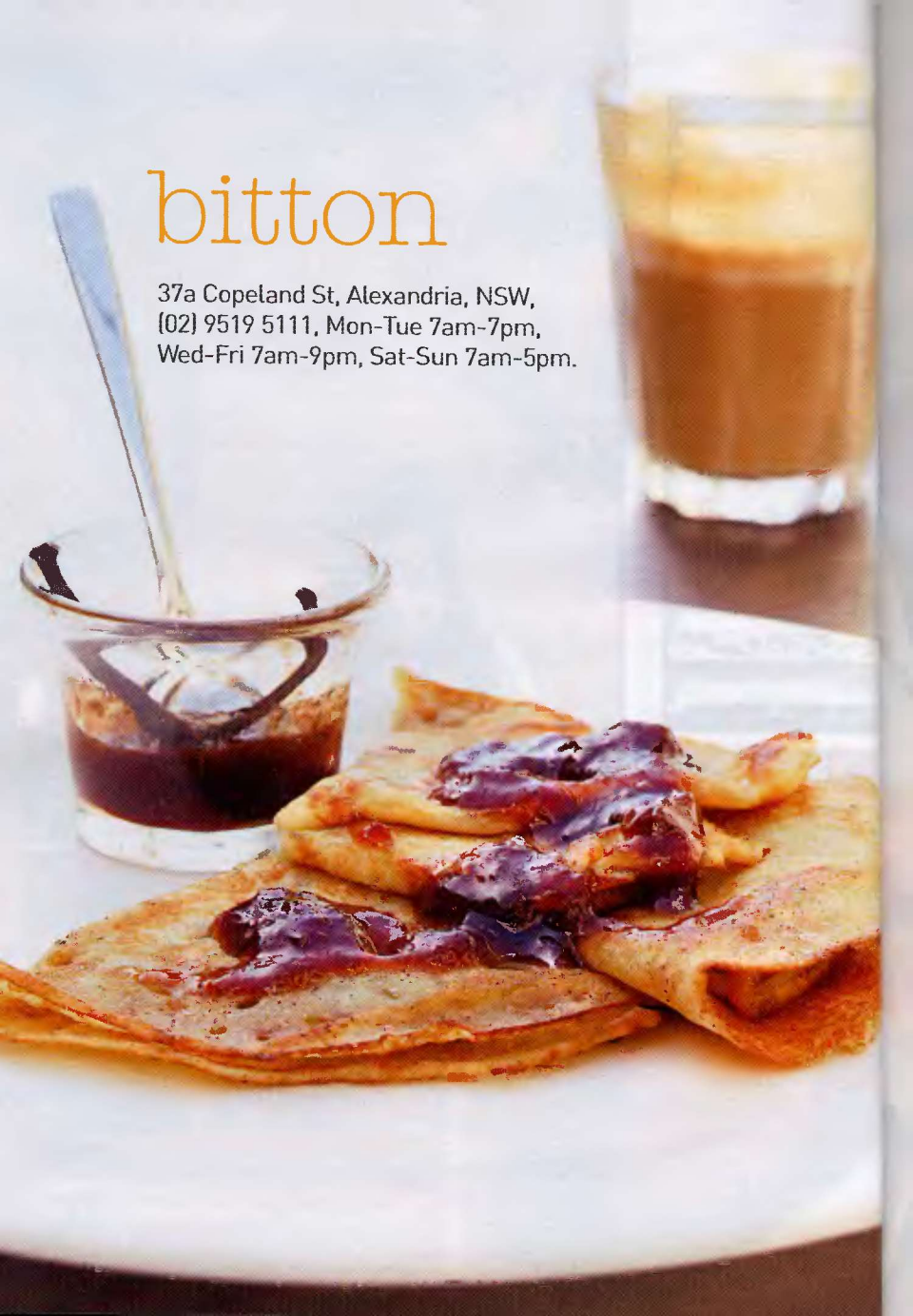
In a large fry pan add a little olive oil and fry the chopped green chilli and crushed clove of garlic, cook for a minute. Add the mushrooms and sauté together for 5 mins. Add the cream, bring to boil and remove from heat.

For the pasta and to serve

Cook the pasta 'al dente' then drain and add to the mushroom sauce. Pour the hot bacon and pumpkin seeds into the pasta and add the chopped chives, stir through and serve.

bitton

37a Copeland St, Alexandria, NSW,
(02) 9519 5111, Mon-Tue 7am-7pm,
Wed-Fri 7am-9pm, Sat-Sun 7am-5pm.



After growing tired of the politics at big hotel dining rooms, French-born chef David Bitton and his wife, Sohani, decided to branch out on their own, opening Bitton Cafe in Alexandria eight years ago. "There wasn't much happening in the area then," says David, "but now there's Danks Street Depot, Bourke Street Bakery, Fratelli Fresh – it's turned into a real foodie precinct. We were trend-setters!" Indeed, the cafe brims with a stylish crowd of local couples and young mothers who come for one-pan bacon and eggs or a croque monsieur, then shop for fresh foods and niche products in the providore section. Always popular are the Bitton Gourmet sauces and preserves, including the strawberry and vanilla jam – served here with crepes – based on David's grandmother's recipe. d.

french crepes with strawberry & vanilla jam

Serves 4–6 (makes 12 crepes)

1 1/3 cups (200g) plain flour
1 1/2 tbs caster sugar
3 eggs
1 1/2 cups (375ml) milk
50g unsalted butter, melted,
plus extra melted butter to pan-fry
Strawberry and vanilla jam*, to serve

Sift the flour and sugar with a pinch of sea salt into a large bowl. Make a well in the centre of the mixture, then crack in the eggs.

Using a balloon whisk, gradually bring the dry mixture into the eggs, then pour in the milk and the melted butter. Gently whisk until the mixture is smooth, being careful not to over-mix. Transfer the crepe batter to a jug.

Brush the base of a 20cm non-stick crepe pan or frypan with a paper towel dipped in extra melted butter. Heat over medium heat, then pour 2 tablespoons of batter into the pan, tilting to coat the base (pour any excess batter back into the jug). Cook the crepe for 1 minute or until golden, then flip and cook other side for just under a minute until golden. Transfer to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm. Repeat to make 12 crepes.

To serve, fold each crepe into quarters and top with strawberry and vanilla jam.

* Strawberry and vanilla jam is available from selected delis and gourmet shops, or use other good-quality strawberry jam.

Byron Beach Cafe is a place where locals go for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and where they take visitors from out of town. And it's easy to see why, with a prime spot right on the beach, sublime panoramic views and 1950s surf club ambience. Start the day out on the deck with tropical fruit salad or this omelette wrap. Owners Ben and Belinda Kirkwood aim for cafe food with an edge, so at lunch, the burgers have a distinct touch: think Japanese crumbed snapper burger with Asian coleslaw and wasabi, or spiced tofu and brown rice burger. Take away the signature fish and chips to the adjacent park or down to the beach. Dinnertime, chef Matthew Gillespie turns out daily specials from bountiful regional produce. **d.**

breakfast wrap

Serves 4

8 free-range eggs
½ cup (125ml) pure (thin) cream
⅓ cup (25g) grated parmesan
2 tbs chopped flat-leaf parsley
40g unsalted butter
3 tbs aioli (garlic mayonnaise)
4 tbs tomato relish, plus extra to serve
4 pieces lavash or Lebanese bread
2 loosely packed cups rocket
4 roma tomatoes, sliced
1 avocado, sliced

Preheat the grill to high.

Lightly beat the eggs in a bowl. Stir in cream, parmesan and parsley and season. Melt 2 teaspoons butter in a frypan over medium-low heat. When butter starts to foam, pour in ¼ of egg mixture and cook for about 1 minute, carefully tilting pan to spread the egg evenly. Use a spatula or a fork to draw the cooked egg away from the edge of pan so the uncooked egg runs into the space created. Remove pan from heat and place under grill for 1 minute or until set (do not over-cook). Place on a tray, cover loosely with foil and repeat with the remaining egg mixture and butter to make four omelettes in total.

Spread the aioli and tomato relish over the lavash bread. Lay the omelettes over, then top with the rocket, tomato and avocado. Roll up each, then halve. Serve the wraps with extra tomato relish.

alfajores (shortbread with dulce de leche)

Makes 20

395g can condensed milk
1/4 cup (55g) caster sugar
400g plain flour
60g chilled unsalted butter, chopped
1 egg, plus 1 egg yolk
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp honey
Pinch of ground cinnamon
Zest of 1 orange
1/2 cup (125ml) milk
Melted good-quality dark or white chocolate (optional), to decorate

To make dulce de leche (caramel), remove and discard label from can of condensed milk, then use a can opener to make 2 small holes in the top. Place in a saucepan, open-side up. Fill pan with water to come almost to the top of the can (about 1cm below rim). Bring to the boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 3 hours until a caramel forms, topping up with more water to keep the same level. Carefully remove can and cool. Scoop the dulce de leche into a bowl, then set aside. (It will keep for 3 months in the fridge.)

Place all the remaining ingredients, except the chocolate, in a food processor and slowly process together until a dough forms. Remove and shape into a disc, then enclose in plastic wrap. Chill for 3 hours.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line 2 trays with baking paper (or cook in batches). Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to 1cm thick. Use a 7-8cm cutter to cut 40 circles. Place on trays, then bake for 12-15 minutes until golden. Cool on a wire rack.

When cool, spread half the biscuits with dulce de leche and sandwich with the remaining biscuits. If desired, dip the finished biscuits into melted chocolate and leave to set on baking paper.

3 eggs cafe

100 Brighton Blvd, North Bondi, NSW, (02) 9365 6262,
Mon-Sun 7am-3pm.

As the name might suggest, this relaxed Bondi cafe has eggs mastered. Three eggs make the omelette with goat's cheese, mushrooms, spinach and sage, and three eggs feature in the popular "Big Brekky", with bacon and sausage or avocado and spinach, plus hash browns, mushrooms and tomato. It's the healthy but hearty all-day breakfast menu that keeps this cafe's loyal band of regulars happy. Marcus Herstik, who owns 3 Eggs with wife Gretchen, says their banana smoothie with a double shot of coffee is gaining quite a following and even drawing customers from further afield. And given the location, it's probably no surprise to learn that celebrities are often spotted at the big communal table. **d.**

roast pumpkin, feta & spinach salad

Serves 2

400g butternut pumpkin, peeled, cut into 2cm cubes
6 garlic cloves
Olive oil, to drizzle
1 red onion, thinly sliced
2 tbs pine nuts, toasted
75g Persian feta*
1 cup baby spinach leaves
Balsamic vinegar, to drizzle

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Place the pumpkin onto a baking tray with the garlic cloves. Drizzle generously with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for about 45 minutes or until the pumpkin is tender. Remove the pumpkin and drain any excess oil.

Combine onion, pine nuts, feta and baby spinach in a bowl or on a platter. Add warm pumpkin, season, then gently toss. Drizzle with balsamic and serve immediately.

* Persian (or marinated) feta is available from supermarkets and delis.

cafe mint

579 Crown St, Surry Hills, NSW, (02) 9319 0848, Mon 7am-4pm, Tue-Wed 7am-9.30pm, Thur-Fri 7am-10pm, Sat 7am-4pm.

Standing out isn't easy in Surry Hills' crowded cafe scene, but Mint's Hugh Foster has carved a niche by giving a North African accent to the usual breakfast, burger and salad suspects. Squeeze in at one of the small side tables or spread out on the communal one, and swap the standard breakfast fry-up for Mint's signature spicy lamb mince on creamy hummus, served with za'atar-spiced Turkish toast, or a sweet option like this kuneffa – almond ricotta in kataifi pastry with fruit and yoghurt. Lunches include the ras el hanout chicken plate, and a fattoush salad with feta and olives, while dinner is the time to come in for a glass of wine and a selection of housemade dips and mezze, followed by a lamb shank tagine. **d.**

ricotta & almond kuneffa

Serves 2

You'll need to soak the fruit overnight.

150g mixed dried fruits or selection of dried peaches, pears, apricots, figs and dates, soaked overnight in water
1 tbs honey
1 cinnamon quill
3 cardamom pods
Splash of rosewater (optional)
200g fresh ricotta
50ml almond syrup (Orzata)*
50g slivered almonds, lightly toasted
1 tbs unsalted butter
50g kataifi pastry*
Chopped pistachio nuts, to garnish
Icing sugar and yoghurt, to serve

Drain fruit, reserving 100ml soaking liquid. Place liquid in a pan with honey, cinnamon and cardamom, stirring over low heat until honey dissolves. Bring to the boil, then add fruit and rosewater. Remove from the heat.

Mix ricotta, syrup and half the almonds.

Preheat oven to 200°C. Melt butter in a non-stick pan over medium heat. Add half the kataifi, teasing until it covers pan, and cook for 1-2 minutes until gently coloured and crisp. Place half the ricotta in centre of kataifi. Gently fold pastry over to almost enclose. Place on a baking tray. Repeat with remaining pastry and ricotta. Bake for 5 minutes. Dust with icing sugar, garnish with nuts. Serve with fruit and yoghurt.

* Orzata is from gourmet shops. Kataifi is from Greek and Middle Eastern shops.

At this busy cafe on Hamilton's vibrant Beaumont Street, chef Aaron Cole's breakfasts break the mould. Drawing on local, biodynamic and organic produce where possible, Aaron sends out an array of innovative options. At breakfast, pull up a stool at the communal table that's piled high with magazines and sweet things, and tuck into poached Cornucopia eggs with slow-cooked beans, a hefty bacon rasher and Morpeth Sourdough. The locavore theme continues with organic coffee from Newcastle's artisan roaster, PeaBerrys. Lunchtime offers up more cut-above cafe fare. Try the house-smoked salmon omelette with herbs, capers and goat's cheese, matched with a very civilised tasting glass of pinot gris. **d.**

baked white beans

Serves 6

You'll need to soak the beans overnight.

350g dried white beans (such as cannellini)
2 tbs olive oil
2 onions, finely chopped
250g speck*, diced
1 large red capsicum, finely chopped
2 bay leaves
1 1/2 tbs coriander seeds, freshly ground
1 1/2 tbs sweet paprika
10 thyme sprigs, plus extra to garnish
3 x 400g cans whole peeled tomatoes
125g unsalted butter
1/4 cup (90g) honey
Toasted sourdough, grilled thick-cut bacon rashers* and soft-poached eggs, to serve

Soak beans in a bowl of water overnight (ensure beans remain under water). Drain.

Heat oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Add onion and speck and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Add the capsicum, bay leaves, coriander, paprika and thyme and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes until capsicum is soft. Reduce heat to medium-low, add tomatoes, squashing them with a wooden spoon, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 1 1/2 hours or until speck is tender.

Meanwhile, rinse beans, then place in a large pan. Add water to cover, then bring to a gentle simmer (don't allow to boil) for about 1 hour or until beans are tender.

Lightly mash the bacon and tomato to thicken the sauce, then add the butter and honey and season with sea salt. Taste and adjust. Stir in beans and cook for a further 20-25 minutes to allow flavours to develop.

Serve the beans on toast, with bacon and poached eggs, garnished with thyme.

* From selected delis and butchers. Substitute streaky bacon for speck.

stem ginger cheesecakes

Makes 6

You'll need six 10cm springform cake pans, available from kitchenware shops.

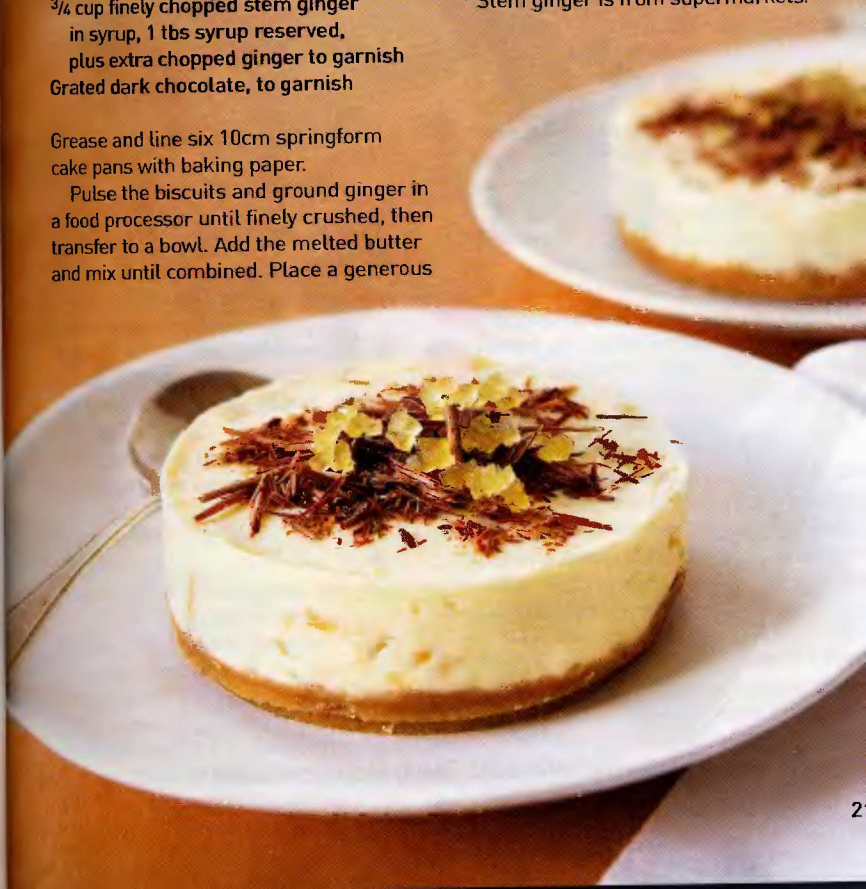
240g digestive biscuits
1 tsp ground ginger
125g unsalted butter, melted
500g cream cheese
1/2 cup (110g) caster sugar
1/2 cup (120g) full-cream ricotta
100ml thin (pure) cream
1/2 cup (125g) mascarpone
3/4 cup finely chopped stem ginger in syrup, 1 tbs syrup reserved, plus extra chopped ginger to garnish
Grated dark chocolate, to garnish

Grease and line six 10cm springform cake pans with baking paper.

Pulse the biscuits and ground ginger in a food processor until finely crushed, then transfer to a bowl. Add the melted butter and mix until combined. Place a generous spoonful of the biscuit mixture in each cake pan. Smooth and level with the back of a spoon, then chill until required.

Use a food processor to whiz the cream cheese until smooth. Add the remaining ingredients, except ginger and chocolate, and process until well combined. Fold in chopped ginger and reserved syrup. Evenly divide mixture among pans, smoothing top with a palette knife. Chill cheesecakes for at least 2 hours or until set. Sprinkle grated chocolate and extra stem ginger over cheesecakes, then serve immediately.

* Stem ginger is from supermarkets.



conti

3 Park St, Brunswick Heads, NSW,
(02) 6685 0493, Mon-Sun 7.30am-4pm.

The sleepy beachside town of Brunswick Heads on the northern New South Wales coast is all laidback charm and seemingly endless summers. It's also now home to one of the state's sexiest cafes in Conti, a sophisticated set-up that sees chef Stephen Tuckwell flex his creativity in a sleek, urban space. Here, indoor and outdoor blend seemlessly to make the most of the idyllic setting. The finishing touches – from vintage French posters to leather-bound menus and bentwood chairs – are courtesy of Stephen's visual merchandiser wife, Ozden. And the food is suitably smart, with options ranging from organic buckwheat and apple hotcakes with caramelised banana to pan-fried whiting with a fennel and olive salad. **d.**

chargrilled calamari & crispy potato salad

Serves 6

Zest of 2 lemons, plus a splash of lemon juice, and lemon wedges to serve
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
4 small red chillies, chopped
1 cup (250ml) olive oil, plus extra splash
12 small squid tubes, halved, scored
16 chat potatoes
Garlic yoghurt, to drizzle
Rocket and red onion salad, to serve

Chilli sauce
2 tbs olive oil
2 onions, roughly chopped
4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
4 small red chillies, chopped
1 tbs tomato paste
100ml white wine vinegar
2 tsp sugar
2 x 400g cans whole tomatoes
8 pieces roasted red capsicum (from delis)

Chop zest, parsley, garlic and chillies in a food processor, then blend with 200ml oil to a rough paste. Toss with calamari, then marinate in fridge for 2 hours.

Meanwhile for the sauce, heat 2 tbs oil in a pan over medium heat. Cook onion for 10 minutes, stirring, then add garlic, chilli and tomato paste. Cook for 5 minutes. Add vinegar and sugar. Simmer for 5 minutes or until liquid evaporates. Add tomato and cook over low heat for 45 minutes, stirring. Add capsicum and cook for 45 minutes or until thick. Cool, then puree. Set aside.

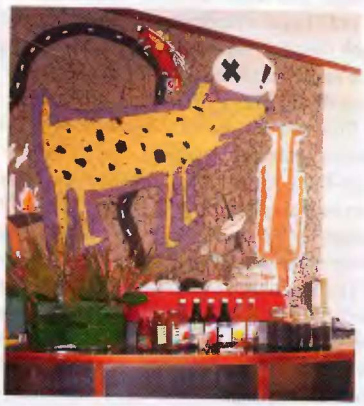
Boil potatoes for 10 minutes or until just tender. Drain, cool slightly, then slice into 1cm-thick rounds. Heat remaining oil in a pan over medium-high heat. In batches, fry potato for 3 minutes each side until golden. Drain on paper towel. Season. Keep warm.

Heat a chargrill on high heat. Cook squid for 2 minutes until opaque. Place in a bowl with lemon juice and a splash of oil. Divide potato and squid among plates, drizzle with chilli sauce, yoghurt and squid juices. Top with rocket and onion. Serve with lemon.

digi.kaf

174 St Johns Rd, Glebe, NSW, (02) 9660 3509,
Mon-Fri 7am-4pm, Sat 8am-4pm, Sun 9am-3pm.

A veteran of the Sydney cafe scene, Digi.Kaf offers the perfect blend of old and new. Housed within an atmospheric, vine-shrouded terrace, much of the furniture is made from recycled timber, while the handmade mosaic above the coffee counter reflects owner Paul Dore's favourite aspects of the Glebe neighbourhood. "We have a handful of regulars who bring in their laptops and work out of the cafe each day," says Paul. "They find it has less distractions than an office." From a menu that's packed with updated cafe classics, locals choose from spiced rhubarb crumble, the Mexican breakfast, or scrambled eggs with crispy prosciutto and a swirl of pesto. **d.**



banana bread with mascarpone

Serves 4

125g softened unsalted butter, plus extra to serve
1 firmly packed cup (220g) brown sugar
2 eggs, plus 1 egg yolk for mascarpone
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 large, ripe banana, mashed
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbs shredded coconut
1 1/2 cups (225g) plain flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tbs milk
250g mascarpone
2 tbs icing sugar
1/4 cup honey, plus extra to drizzle
Zest and juice of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 170°C. Grease and line a 1L loaf pan with baking paper.

Use an electric beater to beat butter and sugar until thick and pale. Add eggs, cinnamon, banana, vanilla and coconut. Beat on low speed until combined. Sift flour, baking powder and soda over and fold in gently, then fold in the milk. Pour into pan and bake for 40-45 minutes until a skewer inserted in centre comes out clean.

Just before serving, whisk yolk through mascarpone. Fold in icing sugar, honey, zest and juice. Serve bread lightly toasted with butter, mascarpone and honey.

Step inside this 1929 Moorish-style building at Sydney's Balmoral Beach, and you'll find a casual 80-seater cafe with a choice of comfy booths, French oval tables and the Moroccan-inspired "Red Room" (pictured), with overstuffed armchairs and a cosy fireplace. Executive chef and owner Serge Dansereau's mod-Mediterranean menu boasts plenty of fresh seafood, pastas and pizza. Regulars check in first thing for coffee and breakfast, like the zucchini frittata with salt cod, poached egg and rocket. The cafe recently took its peppered beef off the lunch and dinner menu, but it's back due to popular demand. Other mains favourites include mussels in cream sauce and seafood risotto. d

strawberries, passionfruit and cream with crisp meringue

Serves 4–6

At The Bathers' Pavilion, they garnish this dessert with a toffee shard.

3 eggwhites
250g caster sugar
30g cornflour
30g icing sugar, plus extra 1/4 cup (65g)
1/2 tsp white vinegar
1/2 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
250g punnet strawberries, hulled, halved
Pulp of 3 passionfruit

Chantilly cream
2 cups (500ml) thickened cream
175g pure icing sugar
1/2 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped

Preheat oven to 100°C. Line a baking tray.

Whisk eggwhites with an electric beater until soft peaks form. Gradually add the caster sugar, 1 tbs at a time, whisking until completely dissolved. Whisk in cornflour, vinegar, vanilla seeds and the 30g icing sugar until mixture is thick and glossy.

Spoon the meringue into a piping bag fitted with a plain 1cm nozzle. Pipe straight lines across the tray to make rustic sticks. Bake for 1 hour. Allow to cool in switched off oven (with door ajar) for 2–3 hours, then break into pieces.

Puree half the strawberries in a blender. Place in a small saucepan with the extra 1/4 cup icing sugar over medium heat. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat. Allow to cool slightly, then chill until ready to serve.

For the chantilly cream, use an electric beater to whisk the cream, icing sugar and vanilla seeds in a large bowl until thickened. Chill until required.

To serve, toss remaining strawberries in the strawberry sauce. Divide half the berries among glasses. Top with some of the passionfruit and some of the chantilly cream. Scatter over meringue, top with more strawberries and passionfruit, then finish with and a dollop of chantilly cream.

anouk

212 Given Tce, Paddington, Qld, (07) 3367 8663, Mon-Sun 6.30am-4pm.

News travels fast in Brisbane, so when Justine Whelan moved on from The Gunshop Cafe in West End to open Anouk, crowds followed. "We opened with six staff," says Justine. "Now there's 21!" Queues spill out of the historic room onto the footpath, where there's also seating for those who want to soak up the sun and inner-city Paddington vibe. "Paddington's a wonderful, dynamic area," says Justine. "We're surrounded by stores, so at lunch we tend to serve ladies who are out shopping." Anouk is known for its restaurant-style fare, with lunch numbers like fusilli pasta with prawns, cherry tomatoes, parmesan, roast lemon and a coppa and red capsicum nduja (a spicy Italian pesto). But it's at breakfast when Anouk is really buzzing. "Our menu is a little left of centre, so you won't find the traditional bacon and eggs," says Justine. Popular with the regulars are dishes such as baked French toast with prosciutto, or smoked trout in creamed spinach with poached eggs and ciabatta. **d.**

sesame lime chicken burger

Makes 2

1/3 cup (80ml) lime juice
2 tbs canola oil
1 tbs sesame oil
1/2 tsp wasabi powder or paste
2 x 200g chicken breasts, each sliced into 3 escalopes
2 thick slices bread, toasted
1/3 cup baba ghanoush, to spread
Tomato and salad leaves, to serve

Peanut coriander pesto (makes 1 cup)
1 1/2 tbs (20g) roasted peanuts
1 small chilli, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1/2 tbs finely grated fresh ginger
1 firmly packed cup Thai basil leaves*
1/2 cup Vietnamese mint leaves*
1 firmly packed cup coriander leaves
1 tsp grated palm sugar or brown sugar
1 tsp each fish sauce and lime juice
100ml peanut oil

In a glass dish, mix lime juice, oils and wasabi powder. Add chicken and toss to coat. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.

For pesto, whiz all ingredients except the oil in a processor until finely chopped. Add the oil and process to a paste.

Heat a non-stick pan over medium-high heat. Cook the chicken for 2-3 minutes each side until golden and cooked through. Cover and set aside for 5 minutes. Spread the toast with baba ghanoush, top with tomato and chicken, drizzle with pesto, then top with salad leaves and serve.

* Thai basil and Vietnamese mint are from selected greengrocers and Asian shops.

aromas

32 Hastings St, Noosa Heads, Qld, (07) 5474 9788,
Mon-Sun 7am-late.

Sitting in the heart of Noosa's Hastings Street, Aromas brims with laidback vacationers from the early hours until late in the evening. Parisian-style furniture rims two sides of the open-air space, all under cover and capturing light salty breezes year round. There's a counter inside filled with petite sandwiches, croissants and a plethora of sweets. A lunch menu and clipped Australian-based wine list supplement these colourful options. At night, the dimmed lights, sparkling candles, clothed tables and a menu designed by Philip Johnson of Ecco all conspire to morph this casual cafe into a moodily lit bistro. By day there are great juices and gelati, by night a range of coastal-chic cocktails to kick off your evening. **d.**

bloodiest mary

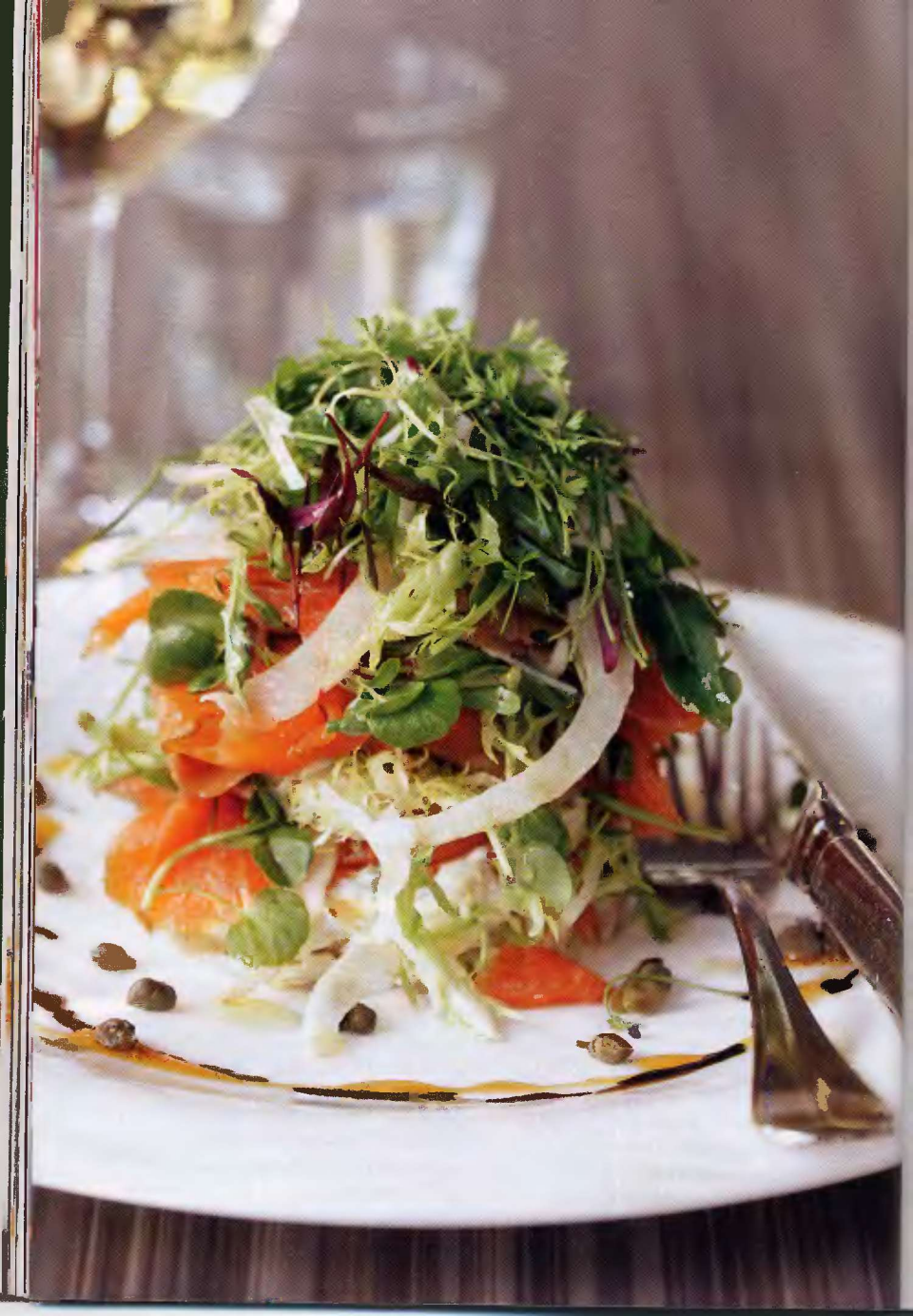
Makes 1

2 lemon wedges, plus thinly sliced lemon rind and lemon slices to serve
2 thin slices red chilli (optional)
1 shot (30ml) vodka
Dash (3-6 drops) of Tabasco sauce
150ml tomato juice
3 tsp Worcestershire sauce (or to taste), plus extra to drizzle if desired
1/2 cup ice cubes, plus extra to serve
Celery stalks and cucumber ribbons

Chill a tall glass in the fridge.

Meanwhile, muddle the lemon wedges and chilli, if using, in a cocktail shaker until crushed. Add the vodka, a dash of Tabasco (or to taste), tomato juice, Worcestershire sauce and 1/2 cup ice. Shake for 10-15 seconds, then season with salt and pepper to taste.

Half-fill the chilled glass with ice cubes, then strain the bloody mary into the glass. Garnish with celery stalks, cucumber ribbons, lemon rind and a slice of lemon.



buzz bistro

1000 Ann St, Fortitude Valley, Qld, (07) 3252 0511,
Sun-Tue 6.30am-5pm, Wed-Sat 6.30am-10pm.

Chef Daman Hall has moved around the corner from Depot and now delivers his creative take on modern food with a focus on quality produce at Buzz Bistro. In this busy but warm cafe, expect to find such delights as wild boar ragu with olives and gremolata, crab and reef fish ravioli with shellfish foam, or a delicious Roquefort soufflé with poached muscatels anytime after 6pm. The daytime menu is diverse and caters for those looking for a light bite or a hearty repast, the highlight of which are the gorgeous little chicken ribbon sandwiches served on fluffy white bread with fabulous mayonnaise. **d.**

smoked salmon & fennel salad with horseradish dressing

Serves 4

At Buzz Bistro, they serve this with a kipfler potato, caper and red onion salad.

2 cups (50g) rocket or frisée
2 cups (50g) baby salad leaves (mesclun)
1/2 red onion, very thinly sliced
1/2 fennel bulb, very thinly sliced (a mandoline is ideal)
1 1/2 tbs salted baby capers, rinsed
200g sliced smoked salmon
Micro herbs*, to garnish (optional)
Balsamic glaze*, to drizzle

Horseradish dressing

2 tbs freshly grated horseradish* or 1 tbs bought grated horseradish
3 tbs aioli or good-quality mayonnaise
30ml lemon juice

For the horseradish dressing, combine all ingredients in a bowl, then set aside.

Combine the rocket, baby salad leaves, onion, fennel and capers in a bowl, then toss with the horseradish dressing.

Arrange the salad mixture and the salmon on serving plates, drizzle with balsamic glaze, then season and serve.

* Micro herbs and fresh horseradish are from selected greengrocers. Balsamic glaze is from supermarkets and delis.

tropical nougat

Makes 32 pieces

Edible rice paper, to line
1/2 cup (175g) honey
1 cup (250ml) liquid glucose*
350g caster sugar, plus extra 30g
2 eggwhites
45g copha, melted
125g macadamias, chopped
30g candied mango, chopped
30g candied papaya, chopped

Line a 16cm x 26cm non-stick slab pan with baking paper, overhanging on longer sides. Line base with rice paper.

Place honey, glucose, sugar and 1 cup (250ml) water in a pan over medium-high heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until sugar and glucose dissolve, occasionally brushing down sides of pan with a pastry brush dipped in warm water. Place a sugar thermometer in pan, bring to the boil and cook uncovered, without stirring, until syrup reaches 120°C (this will take about 10 minutes). Once syrup reaches 120°C, use the whisk attachment on an electric stand mixer to whisk eggwhites until firm peaks form. It's important to use a stand mixer because, unlike a hand-held beater, it has a motor powerful enough to beat the nougat. Add extra 30g sugar and continue to whisk until sugar has completely dissolved.

Fill sink with 5cm cold water. As soon as syrup reaches 140-143°C (hard crack stage), remove pan from heat. Place base of pan in water for 5 seconds or until bubbles subside. With beater on medium-slow speed, slowly pour hot syrup into eggwhite in a thin, steady stream. Whisk until syrup is incorporated, scraping down sides of bowl as you go. Slowly pour in copha, scrape down sides, increase speed to medium-high and whisk for 2-3 minutes until thick and glossy.

Working quickly, add nuts and fruit and stir until well combined. Pour nougat into prepared pan. Use a spatula to spread evenly and smooth the surface. Place rice paper over and press gently. Set aside in a cool, dry place for 6 hours or until set. Lift nougat from pan and cut into 4cm x 3cm pieces.

* Glucose is from supermarkets.

pearl cafe

28 Logan Rd, Woolloongabba, Qld, (07) 3392 3300, Tue-Sat 7am-late.

Chalked on a blackboard at Pearl Cafe is a quote: "Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast". Oscar Wilde might've had to change his mind if he'd paid a visit to this welcoming cafe leading the transformation of a once-quiet street in Brisbane's Woolloongabba. It's all sprung from the imagination of owner Daniel Lewis, whose credentials include time as manager of the popular Gunshop Cafe in nearby West End. At Pearl, he seamlessly blends old with new: brick walls are hung with mirrors from old dressers, tea is served in pewter pots. Chef Daniel Rowe takes care of those brilliant breakfasts, such as homestyle baked beans or eggy brioche with mascarpone and berries, as well as lunches like these fish fingers with chunky tartare. **d.**

salmon fish finger sandwich with chunky tartare sauce

Serves 4

1 tbs finely chopped dill
200g panko or regular breadcrumbs
1/3 cup (50g) plain flour, sifted
1 egg, beaten
4 x 100g skinless salmon fillets, pin-boned, halved lengthways
Sunflower oil, to shallow-fry
8 slices white bread (such as sourdough)
Cos lettuce leaves, sliced tomato and lemon wedges, to serve

Chunky tartare sauce

1 cup (300g) whole-egg mayonnaise
2 dill pickles, roughly chopped
1/4 cup (50g) capers, rinsed, chopped
1 small red onion, finely chopped
1 tbs roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 tbs roughly chopped tarragon leaves

Combine dill and breadcrumbs in a bowl. Place flour and egg in separate bowls. Lightly coat fish in flour, then dip into egg and coat in breadcrumbs. Cover and chill.

For sauce, combine ingredients. Season.

Heat 3-4cm oil in a pan over medium-high heat until a cube of bread turns golden in 30 seconds. Fry the fish, in 2 batches, for 3-4 minutes, turning, until golden but pink in centre. Drain on paper towel. Spread the bread with tartare, then fill with lettuce, tomato and fish fingers. Serve with lemon.

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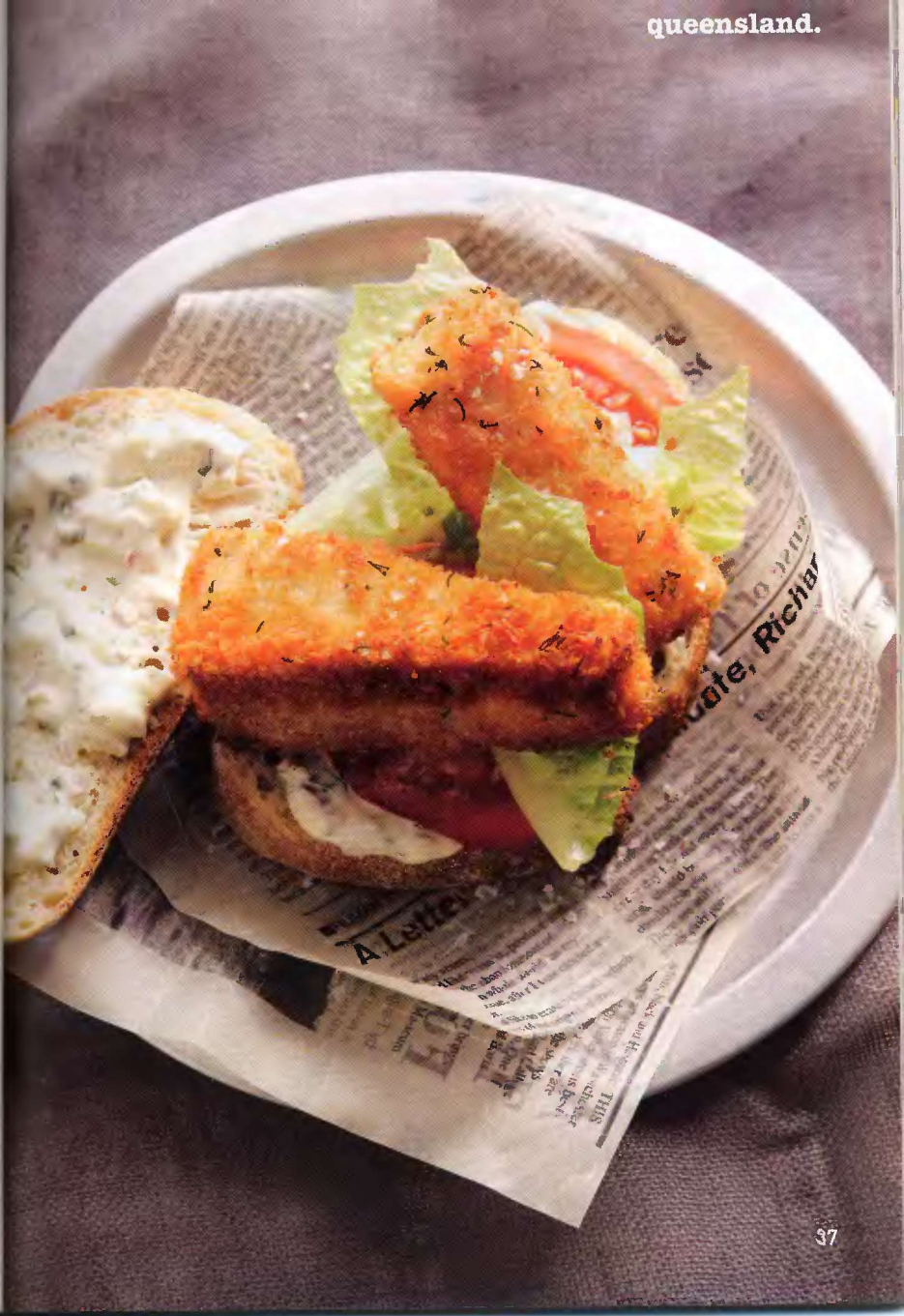

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102-104 Melbourne St, South Brisbane, Qld, (07) 3255 2033
Mon-Sun 7am-3pm.

Luscious eggs Benedict, portobello mushrooms with grilled haloumi, banana pancakes with maple-syrup ice cream... with choices like these, it's hard to think of breakfast at South Brisbane's Era Cafe as anything other than a truly hedonistic experience. The abstemious among us, however, are also well catered for with plenty of less indulgent offerings. This sunny cafe, which sits to one side of a bistro and wine store, buzzes with life all day, and little wonder, with items such as crisp confit duck leg with beetroot and blood orange dressing for lunch, and a colourful array of housemade desserts, cakes and slices on display. **d.**

pan-fried haloumi with tomato salsa, asparagus, balsamic and rocket

Serves 4

2 bunches asparagus spears, woody ends trimmed, blanched
Olive oil spray
180g haloumi, cut into 1cm slices
2 cups (50g) wild rocket
Balsamic glaze*, to drizzle

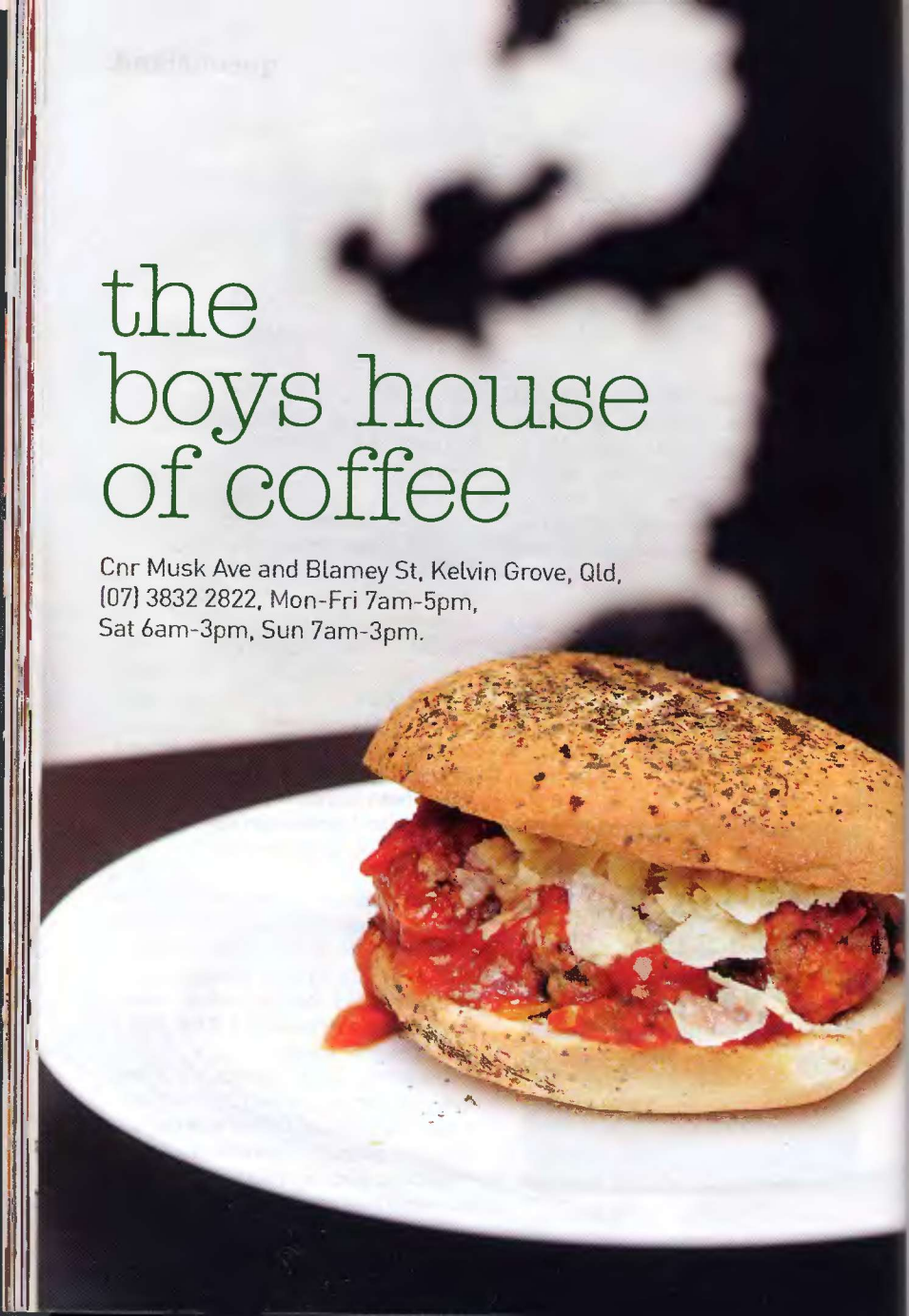
Tomato salsa
1 small red onion, diced
6 roma tomatoes, seeds removed, diced
Juice of 1 lemon
1/2 cup basil leaves, finely chopped
1/4 cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, finely chopped

For salsa, combine ingredients in a bowl.

Place a non-stick frypan over medium heat. Spray the asparagus with olive oil, then cook, turning, for 3 minutes until slightly charred. Remove and set aside. Add haloumi and cook for 1-2 minutes each side until golden.

Divide the rocket, haloumi, asparagus and salsa among plates, finishing with a spoonful of salsa. Drizzle with the balsamic glaze, then serve immediately.

* Balsamic glaze is available from supermarkets and delis.



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Designed to cater for the growing tide of youth that this new urban precinct is hinged around, The Boys House of Coffee hums with a constant flow of students who descend in great, colourful tribes from the adjacent Queensland University of Technology. Graffiti and pop art adorn the walls, polished concrete floors and outdoor seating. Meals are priced to encourage students rather than scare them off, and the food style is hearty and honest. The regular menu is supplemented with a board of specials, which may contain Italian favourites such as fettuccine carbonara, meatballs on toasted focaccia under a fine cloud of parmesan, or a mug of thyme and kumara soup. Coffee pancakes with orange and almond mascarpone is a popular breakfast option. **d.**

italian meatballs with parmesan on focaccia

Serves 4

500g beef mince
1 large garlic clove, crushed
1/2 onion, finely chopped
1 egg
1/2 cup (35g) fresh breadcrumbs
1 tomato, finely chopped
1 cup basil leaves, chopped
1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped
2 tbs grated parmesan,
plus shaved parmesan to serve
Toasted focaccia, to serve

Sauce

1 tbs olive oil
1/2 onion, finely chopped
1 large garlic clove, finely chopped
1 1/2 tsp Cajun seasoning
1/4 cup (60ml) dry red wine
400g can crushed tomatoes
1 1/2 tbs tomato paste
1 bay leaf
1 tbs each chopped basil and parsley

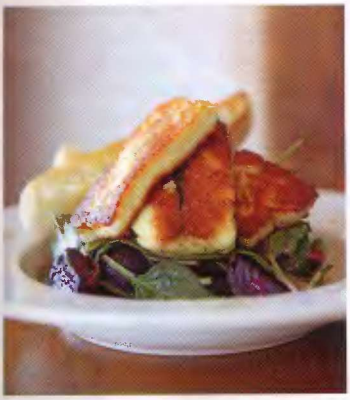
Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Combine the mince, garlic, onion, egg, breadcrumbs, tomato, basil, parsley and parmesan. Season, then roll into walnut-sized balls. Place on a greased baking tray. Bake for 20-30 minutes until browned and cooked through. Drain on paper towel.

Meanwhile, for the sauce, heat oil in a pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and stir for 5 minutes until softened. Add Cajun seasoning and cook for 1 minute until fragrant. Add wine and simmer until reduced by half. Add tomato, tomato paste and bay leaf and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes or until thickened. Season with salt, pepper and sugar to taste, then stir in the herbs.

Toss the meatballs in the tomato sauce, then serve on focaccia with parmesan.

Owning a cafe may seem to be an unlikely career change for a financier and a nurse, but for husband-and-wife team Vasil and Susan Nikolaidis, it's proved to be the perfect move. "Vasil had experience in catering and as we both love eating out and grew up surrounded by wholesome food, a cafe was ideal," says Susan. They spent a year searching for the location before settling on Unley in 2006. "We're set back from the city, so we attract a diverse range of people," says Susan. "Execs grab a morning espresso, mums and kids arrive mid-morning, then it's young groups for lunch." Arrive after the lunch buzz, and you'll find it's the perfect spot to relax with coffee and a magazine. The Med-influenced menu benefits from careful sourcing of produce, such as ricotta made by a local Italian family and authentic haloumi for this salad. **d.**



haloumi & roast beetroot salad with tahini dressing

Serves 2

1 bunch baby beetroot (about 6), peeled, quartered
2 tbs balsamic vinegar
200ml extra virgin olive oil
8 Swiss brown mushrooms (about 150g)
2 tbs tahini (sesame paste)*
Juice of 1 lemon
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 handfuls baby spinach leaves
250g haloumi cheese*, cut into 6 slices
Grilled Turkish bread fingers, to serve

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Combine the beetroot in a roasting dish with the balsamic vinegar and 100ml of the oil, then season with salt and pepper. Cover and roast for 1 hour or until just tender. Add the mushrooms and bake, uncovered, for a further 15 minutes or until the mushrooms are tender.

Combine the tahini, lemon juice, garlic and 1/3 cup (80ml) oil in a small bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

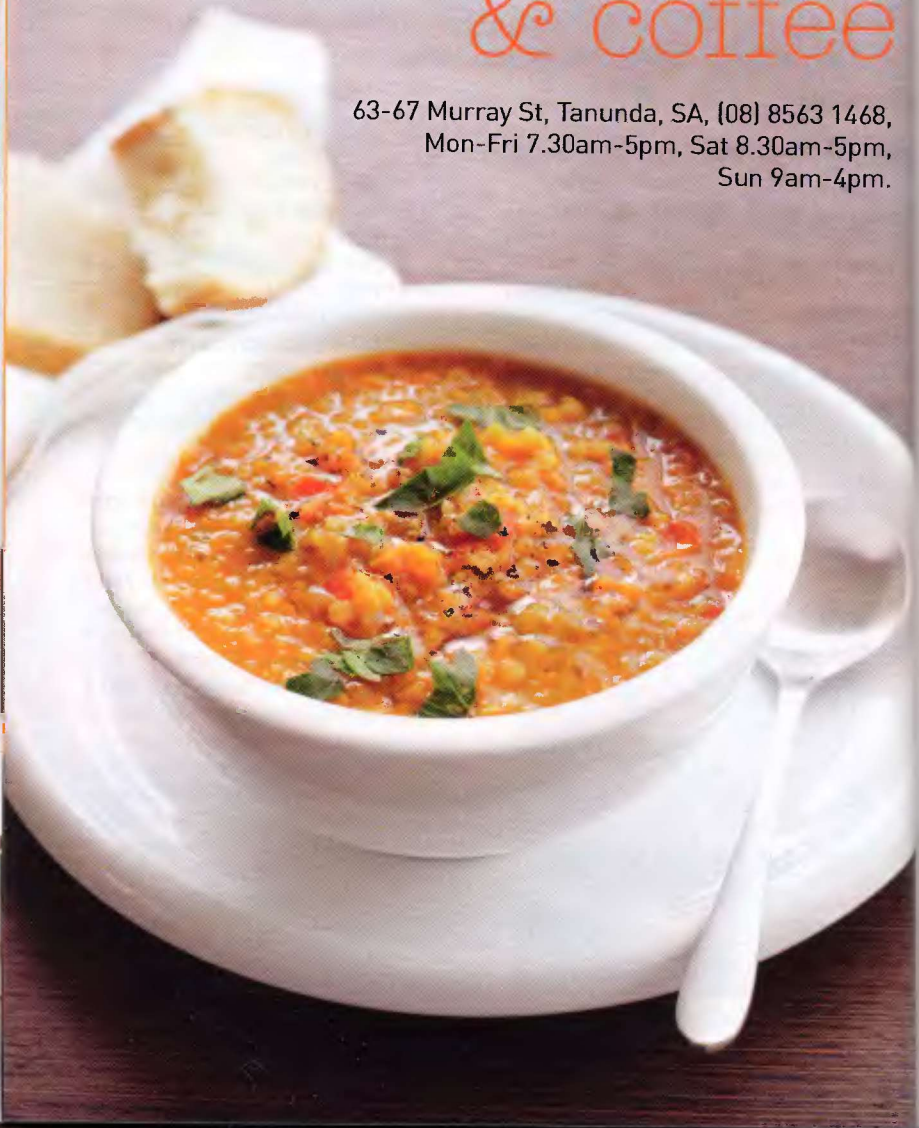
Toss the beetroot, mushrooms and spinach with the tahini dressing in a large bowl. Divide among bowls.

Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil in a frypan over high heat. Cook haloumi for 1 minute each side or until golden. Top salads with haloumi and serve with bread.

* Tahini is from the health food aisle in supermarkets. Haloumi is a hard sheep's milk cheese, from supermarkets and delis.

keils fine food & coffee

63-67 Murray St, Tanunda, SA, (08) 8563 1468,
Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm, Sat 8.30am-5pm,
Sun 9am-4pm.



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Keils is a step in the right direction for Barossa's cafe culture. The look is all white walls, cool art and pressed metal ceilings, and the coffee made by owner Elsa Holmes with Toby's Estate beans is good. Try the local Fleming & Ware muesli with creamy yoghurt and fresh fruit or something from the selection of cakes. The orange and almond cake and the lemon sour cream cake have their fans, but we reckon it's easy to develop a weakness for the lemon slice. At lunch Keils is building up quite a reputation for fresh-made baguettes – perhaps loaded with roast beef, rocket, parmesan and horseradish cream or smoked salmon and cream cheese. There's also a BLT boasting that rather fine Barossa bacon from Schulz's Butchers down the road in Angaston. **d.**

spiced lentil soup

Serves 4-6

30g unsalted butter
1 onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2cm piece of ginger, grated
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 tsp ground coriander
1/2 tsp ground turmeric
1/2 tsp chilli flakes or chilli powder
2 carrots, peeled, finely chopped
400g can chopped tomatoes
1 cup (200g) red lentils
1L (4 cups) vegetable stock
Roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley, to garnish
Crusty bread, to serve

Melt the butter in a saucepan over low heat. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli and cook for 5-10 minutes, stirring, until onion is softened. Add the carrot, tomato, lentils and vegetable stock, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover with a lid and simmer for 35-40 minutes until the lentils and vegetables are tender.

Season to taste with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Divide the soup among bowls, garnish with parsley and serve with crusty bread.

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Season to taste with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Divide the soup among bowls, garnish with parsley and serve with crusty bread.

bistro dom

24 Waymouth St, Adelaide, SA, (08) 8231 7000,
Mon-Thur 7am-5pm, Fri 7am-late.

Inner-city workers in Adelaide are not only getting a shot of espresso but also a shot of Gallic charm at Bistro Dom. Owners Ben and Dominika Johnston provide a respite in the CBD with a Parisian aesthetic and jazz in the background. "We try to stay away from any pretension and create food that shows a deep sensibility for simple flavours, so that we can present simple but elegant combinations with freshness and harmony," says Ben. In addition to the set menu, which features weekly-changing chicken, duck and beef specials, chefs Andrew Davies and Mimi Rivers are whipping up baguettes, tarts and pastries. A strong wine list also keeps this galley-style cafe exciting for its loyal following, which can now also enjoy the chic cafe until late Fridays. **d.**

bruschetta with mushroom ragout and gruyere

Serves 4

50g dried mushrooms (dried porcini or forest mix)*
1 tbs good-quality extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
250g mixed mushrooms (such as Swiss browns and button mushrooms, or any seasonal mushrooms), sliced
4 slices sourdough bread
1 garlic clove, halved
100g gruyere, thinly sliced
2 tbs chopped flat-leaf parsley

Place the dried mushrooms in a bowl with 1 cup (250ml) boiling water, cover and set aside for 15 minutes. Strain mushrooms, discarding the soaking liquid.

Heat oil in a frypan over medium-low heat. Add fresh and dried mushrooms and cook for 8-10 minutes until mushrooms are very soft. Season generously with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Preheat the grill to high. Toast the sourdough bread until golden. While hot, rub with the cut side of the garlic. Place the toasts on a baking tray. Spoon some of the mushroom mixture onto toast and top with gruyere. Place bruschetta under grill until cheese is just melted. Sprinkle with chopped parsley, drizzle with oil and season with freshly ground black pepper.
* From gourmet food shops and delis.

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braised cuttlefish & fennel risotto

Serves 6

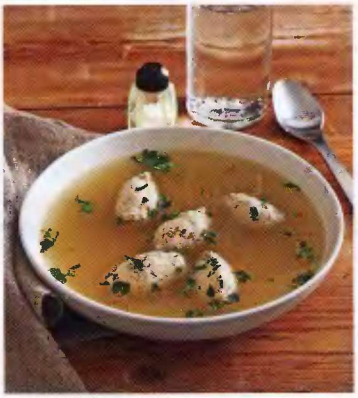
1L fish stock (from delis and fishmongers)
1/4 cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
2 cups (440g) risotto rice (such as vialone nano or arborio)
20g unsalted butter
1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped

Braised cuttlefish
1/4 cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 fennel bulb, core removed, chopped
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 small red chilli, seeds removed, finely chopped
400g cuttlefish or squid tubes, cleaned, cut into 2cm strips
300ml dry white wine
1 cup tomato passata (sieved tomatoes)
1 cup (120g) frozen peas

For cuttlefish, place oil in a deep pan over medium heat. Cook fennel, stirring, for 10 minutes until soft. Add garlic and chilli, stirring, for 1-2 minutes until fragrant. Add cuttlefish and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring, until just opaque. Increase heat to medium-high, add wine and bubble for 1-2 minutes. Stir in passata, then simmer over low heat for 45 minutes until cuttlefish is tender. Add peas for final 2-3 minutes.

When cuttlefish has been cooking for 20 minutes, make risotto. Bring stock to a simmer with 1 cup (250ml) water. Place oil in a deep frypan over medium heat. Cook onion for 2-3 minutes until soft. Add rice and stir for 1-2 minutes to coat grains. Add a ladleful of stock and stir until absorbed. Continue adding stock, 1 ladleful at a time, stirring and ensuring each is absorbed before adding the next, until rice is al dente (about 20 minutes). Stir in the cuttlefish and sauce. Remove from heat, stir in butter and parsley, then season and serve.

More than just a cafe, cosy Pigeon Hole, which opened early 2008, has already created a strong sense of community among its regular customers. Many didn't even know they were neighbours until they kept meeting each other when they dropped in for the excellent coffee. "Who knows," says owner Jay Patey, "we've probably made the area safer." His small regularly-changing menu offers a couple of breakfast dishes, two soups (one of which is usually based on the sort of rich chicken broth that cures most ailments) and three panini. It has enough variety to keep everyone coming back for more but is manageable enough for him to make it all, even the panini – and those panini are as good as delicious toasted sandwiches get. **d.**



chicken broth with dumplings

Serves 4-6

1 tbs olive oil
4 carrots, roughly chopped
½ bunch celery, roughly chopped
4 large onions, halved
4 bay leaves
10 peppercorns
1.8kg free-range chicken
Chopped flat-leaf parsley, to serve

Dumplings
500g finely ground chicken mince
1 cup (70g) coarse fresh breadcrumbs
Small bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped
1 egg
½ tbs ground fennel seeds
Zest of 1 lemon

Heat the oil in large pan over medium-low heat. Add carrot, celery and onion. Cook for 6-8 minutes until onion softens but doesn't brown. Add the bay leaves, peppercorns, chicken and 2.5L (10 cups) water. Slowly bring to the boil over medium heat, skimming any froth from the surface. Once boiling, reduce heat to low and gently simmer for 1 hour. Allow to cool slightly, then remove chicken and set aside. Strain stock, discarding vegetables and herbs.

Heat oven to 180°C. Meanwhile, for the dumplings, combine ingredients in a bowl. Use two spoons or wet hands to roll about 30 dumplings. Chill while you finish stock.

Remove chicken meat* from bones and set aside. Place bones on a baking tray and lightly roast for 20 minutes. Return bones to stock. Simmer over low heat for 2 hours. Strain stock, discarding solids, and season.

Return the stock to the pan and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Cook the dumplings in the stock, in batches of 2-3, for 6-8 minutes until cooked through, then remove and cover loosely with foil.

Ladle broth into bowls, add 5 dumplings to each, sprinkle with parsley and serve.
* The chicken is perfect for a panini filling.
Note: 1 litre of good-quality chicken stock can be substituted for the chicken broth.

angasi

Binalong Bay Rd, Binalong Bay, Tas, (03) 6376 8222, Mon-Sun 9am-late.

Take in the view, over the stark white sand and incredible azure waters of Tasmania's Binalong Bay, and it's easy to see why people love Angasi so much that they voted it winner of our 2007 *delicious.* Cafe Awards. Owners Anita and Darren Lewis and Tom Dicker (the chef) are locals and know where to source the best for Tom's modern Asian- and Middle Eastern-influenced menu. Stripy trumpeter and southern rock lobster are among the seafood catch, plus there's local venison, too. Oysters are always on, as the cafe's name suggests – Angasi is a round, flat native variety. In summer, they serve 40 dozen oysters a day from lunch to dinner, when the menu steps up to more restaurant-style fare. **d.**

prawn salad with omelette, toasted peanuts and honey basil dressing

Serves 6

3 eggs
2 tbs pure (thin) cream
1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped
1/4 cup (60ml) peanut oil
30 green tiger prawns, peeled (tails intact), deveined
2 cups mixed baby salad leaves
3/4 cup (100g) roasted peanuts, chopped

Honey basil dressing
1 1/2 cups basil leaves
2 tbs honey
2 tbs red wine vinegar
1/3 cup (80ml) olive oil

Place eggs, cream and parsley in a bowl, season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and whisk to combine. Heat 1 tablespoon of peanut oil in a non-stick pan over medium heat. Pour in egg mixture and swirl to coat base of pan. Cook for 3 minutes or until underside of omelette is lightly golden and egg is set. Drain on paper towel. Roll up, then thinly slice.

For the dressing, finely slice 1 cup basil and place in a screwtop jar with honey, vinegar and oil. Shake until the honey has dissolved. Season and set aside.

Heat remaining peanut oil in a large frypan or wok over medium-high heat. In 2 batches, cook prawns, stirring, for 1 minute or until just cooked. Place salad, nuts, omelette, prawns and remaining basil in a bowl, then toss with dressing.

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rhubarb & yoghurt breakfast parfait

Serves 2

5 rhubarb stems, trimmed, cut into 7cm pieces
Zest of 1 orange
1/3 cup (75g) caster sugar
1 cup thick Greek-style yoghurt, to serve
Toasted rolled oats, to serve
Toasted flaked almonds, to serve

Preheat oven to 180°C. Place rhubarb in a baking dish and scatter with the orange zest and sugar, tossing to coat well. Cover with foil and bake for 12-15 minutes until tender, checking after 10 minutes as the cooking time will depend on the rhubarb. (It can take up to 25 minutes.) The fruit is cooked when a knife is inserted and slips out easily. Chill until required. To serve, alternate layers of the yoghurt, oats and rhubarb in a glass, then scatter with nuts.

the lotus eaters cafe

10 Mary St, Cygnet, Tas, (03) 6295 1996, 9am-4pm Thur-Mon.

The Lotus Eaters Cafe hosts a constant stream of locals, but plenty of visitors from further afield also end up at this small-town cafe in one of Tasmania's food basket regions, with plentiful orchards and a wholefood culture. Co-owners Giselle Benton and Alex Klimenko cook from the heart; everything is prepared on site and produce is sourced locally wherever possible. "Alex draws on her Russian background to make wonderful cakes," says Giselle, "but this ricotta cake comes from Olivia Chapman, who started the cafe with us in 2007." On the savoury side, expect dishes such as parsnip and blue cheese tart or chicken pie, as well as organic baguettes baked daily on site. **d.**

ricotta, fig & chocolate cake

Serves 14-16

3 cups (450g) plain flour, sifted
2 cups (250g) almond meal
1/2 firmly packed cup (100g) brown sugar
1/2 cup (110g) caster sugar
1 tsp baking powder
250g unsalted butter, chopped
1 egg

Ricotta, fig & chocolate filling

1kg fresh ricotta
1/2 cup (110g) caster sugar
1 egg
1 tbs marsala (from bottle shops)
150g dried figs, chopped
100g dark chocolate, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 175°C. Grease and line the base of a 28cm springform cake pan.

Combine flour, almond meal, sugars and baking powder in a bowl. Rub in butter with fingertips until mixture resembles crumbs. Add egg and mix until a crumble forms.

For the filling, pulse the ricotta, sugar, egg and marsala in a food processor until mixture just comes together. Transfer to a bowl, then fold in figs and chocolate.

Press half of crumble into pan. Spread filling evenly. Sprinkle with the remaining crumble and lightly press. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes until golden and centre is firm. Cool in pan for 20 minutes. Serve warm.

el mirage

349 Lygon St, Brunswick East, Vic, (03) 9388 0966
Mon-Fri 7.30am-4.30pm, Sat-Sun 8am-5pm.

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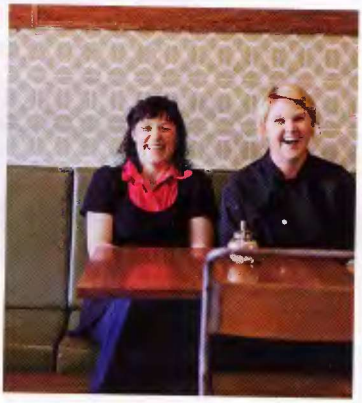
Sarah Crofton (pictured right with chef Jo Hempseed far right) leapt to prominence as one of Melbourne's most exciting cafe-nistas when she opened Small Block at the then-unfashionable end of Lygon Street. The strip has since gone crazy, but Sarah's now slipped up the road to open the equally wonderful El Mirage. Here, in a funky space softened by honey-varnished plywood ceiling and olive-green banquettes, she continues to ply her potent mix of smart design, great short blacks and a menu that might boast chocolate and sour cherry toast with mascarpone or interesting egg combos for breakfast, and the lunchtime conundrum of choosing between tuna cakes or a pear and onion tart. **d.**



tuna cakes with caper salsa

Makes 8

3 potatoes (about 600g), peeled, quartered
425g can tuna in oil, drained
1 tbs wholegrain mustard
1 1/2 cups (105g) fresh breadcrumbs
1/2 red onion, finely chopped
3 eggs
1 cup (150g) plain flour
1 1/2 cups panko breadcrumbs*
2 tbs olive oil
Aioli, to serve

Caper salsa

2 tomatoes, seeds removed, finely chopped
1/4 red onion, finely chopped
2 spring onions, thinly sliced on diagonal
1 1/2 tbs chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
1/2 cup (100g) baby capers, rinsed
2 tbs olive oil
1 tbs lemon juice, plus wedges to serve

For the caper salsa, combine all of the ingredients in a bowl. Set aside.

Place potato in a saucepan and cover with water. Place over medium-high heat and bring to the boil. Boil for 10 minutes or until tender. Drain, place in a bowl and roughly mash with a fork. Combine with tuna, mustard, fresh breadcrumbs, onion and 1 egg. Season. Divide into 8 portions and use wet hands to mould into patties.

Place flour, panko and remaining eggs, beaten, in 3 separate bowls. Dip patties in flour (shake off excess), then in egg, and finally in breadcrumbs to coat.

Heat the olive oil in a non-stick frypan over medium heat. Cook the tuna cakes, in batches, for 3-4 minutes each side or until golden and cooked through.

Serve the tuna cakes topped with salsa, with aioli and lemon wedges.

* Japanese breadcrumbs, from selected supermarkets and Asian food shops.

potato & rosemary frittata

Serves 4

3 large potatoes (about 900g), peeled, cut into wedges
9 free-range eggs
2 cups (500ml) pure (thin) cream
1 rosemary sprig, leaves finely chopped
2 tbs olive oil
1 leek (white part only), thinly sliced
1 cup (120g) grated tasty cheese
Baby spinach salad, to serve

Steam potato for 5-7 minutes until just tender. Cool slightly. Heat grill to medium.

Beat the eggs, cream and rosemary in a large bowl and season. Heat oil in a deep, 28cm ovenproof frypan over low heat. Cook leek, stirring occasionally, for 2-3 minutes until softened. Remove from heat and layer potato evenly over leek. Place pan over medium-low heat. Add egg mixture and scatter with cheese. Cook gently for 3-4 minutes until mixture begins to bubble. Grill for 2-3 minutes until golden and cooked through. Stand for 10 minutes. Slice and serve with salad.

There aren't any pants are on fire at this groovy Hawthorn cafe – instead you'll find old-school tunes coming from the DJ turntables, crisp young service on the floor and, as you'd expect, great coffee from former WA barista of the year, Nolan Hirte. The food is none too shabby either, stepping out from the standard bread/bacon/hollandaise cafe offerings into far more interesting territory. In fact, Liar Liar is one of the few places that could ever persuade us to eat scrambled tofu! These yummy pea and feta fritters are just another perfect example of why Liar Liar has become, in less than a year, a much-loved fixture in the leafy suburb of Hawthorn. **d.**

pea & feta fritters

Serves 6 (makes 12)

500g fresh or frozen peas
1 cup (250ml) milk
4 eggs
1 1/2 cups (225g) self-raising flour
1/4 cup (35g) cornflour
1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves
1/2 cup mint leaves
1 small red onion, finely chopped
125g feta, crumbled
Olive oil spray
Roasted cherry tomatoes, salad leaves and smoked salmon, to serve

Honey & roast garlic cream cheese dressing

2 garlic cloves
Olive oil, to drizzle
125g cream cheese
1/2 cup (120g) sour cream
2 tbs honey
Juice of 1/2 lemon

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

For the dressing, place the garlic on a square of foil. Drizzle with oil, scrunch into a ball and roast for 20 minutes until soft. Place garlic in a food processor with all of the remaining ingredients. Blend until smooth, then season to taste. Set aside.

Blanch the peas in boiling water for 5 minutes or until tender, then refresh in cold water. Place half the peas in a food processor with the milk, eggs, flour and cornflour. Blend until smooth, then add parsley, mint and onion and whiz to just combine. Combine pea mixture in a bowl with feta and remaining peas. Season.

Heat a large non-stick frypan over medium-high heat. Spray with oil and spoon 1/3 cup amounts of pea mixture into pan. Cook for 2 minutes each side or until golden and cooked through. If the fritters are under-cooked in middle, place on a lined baking tray and bake in oven for 2 minutes. Serve fritters with the dressing, tomatoes, salad and smoked salmon.

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birdman eating

238 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, Vic, (03) 9416 4747, Mon 7am-6pm, Tue-Fri 7am-10.30pm, Sat 8am-10.30pm, Sun 8am-6pm.

Birdman Eating... it has to be one of the weirdest names for a cafe. "We wanted something that stuck in your mind," says Tim Tehan who, with Marc Southam, owns this cafe in Melbourne's uber-cool Gertrude Street, Fitzroy. While the name might be quirky, the cafe is decidedly classy. Between them, Tim and Marc's experience spans the cellardoors at Taltarni and Moorilla Estate vineyards, as well as stints at Guernica, The Stokehouse and Luxe. "Our plan was to open a place that did good, honest food at good, honest prices," says Tim. This quinoa porridge has been on the menu since the cafe opened in 2006 – and it's been a hit ever since. "It's a play on those slippery Asian sago puddings," says Tim of the dish that has become a breakfast signature at this funky cafe. d.

coconut quinoa porridge with banana and palm sugar

Serves 4

2 cups (500ml) coconut milk
1 cup (200g) quinoa*
250g dark palm sugar*, cut into small chunks (or use 1 1/4 firmly packed cups dark brown sugar)
2 bananas, sliced
1/2 cup (35g) shredded coconut, toasted

Combine the coconut milk with 1 cup (250ml) water in a jug, then set aside.

Combine the quinoa and a pinch of salt in a pan. Add half the coconut milk mixture, or just enough to cover the grains. Bring to the boil, stirring, over medium-low heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 20-25 minutes until grains are tender and mixture is a porridge consistency, adding some of the remaining liquid if it is becoming too thick.

Meanwhile, place palm sugar and 1 cup (250ml) water in another pan over low heat. Stir to dissolve sugar, then simmer for about 30 minutes until it is a thick, syrupy consistency and is reduced by half.

Pour about 1 tablespoon syrup into each bowl or serving glass, spoon over porridge, then add a little more syrup. Top with some banana and sprinkle with coconut. Store remaining syrup in fridge for up to 1 week.

* Quinoa is from the health food section of supermarkets. Dark palm sugar is from Asian food shops.

lawson grove shop

1 Lawson Grove, South Yarra, Vic, (03) 9866 3640,
Mon-Fri 7.30am-6pm, Sat-Sun 8am-6pm.

Once the shared communal kitchen for this Art Deco apartment block, Lawson Grove Shop pulls off that very Melbourne trick of being lost down a cul de sac. It's the sort of South Yarra location where you'd never expect to find a cafe, let alone one this good – but, judging by the scrum for tables, many have. It's part milk bar, part cafe, part takeaway, and part just a place to chill with a plate of haloumi fritters, a bowl of mushroom soup or these yummy eggs while junior jumbles the lego blocks on the floor next to you. Terry Strudwick and Benjamin Canavan have created a fine-tuned little oasis helped by the skills and a professionalism picked up working in the swankier climes of Pearl and Lamaro's. **d.**

son-in-law eggs

Serves 4

200ml fish sauce
200g palm sugar*, grated
100ml peanut oil
4 free-range eggs
4 iceberg lettuce leaves (10cm across)
2 cups (160g) bean sprouts
4 spring onions, thinly sliced on diagonal
2 long red chillies, thinly sliced
4 mint sprigs, leaves picked
4 coriander sprigs, leaves picked
1/3 cup fried Asian shallots*
Lime wedges, to serve

Warm the fish sauce and palm sugar in a small pan over low heat for 3 minutes, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Set aside.

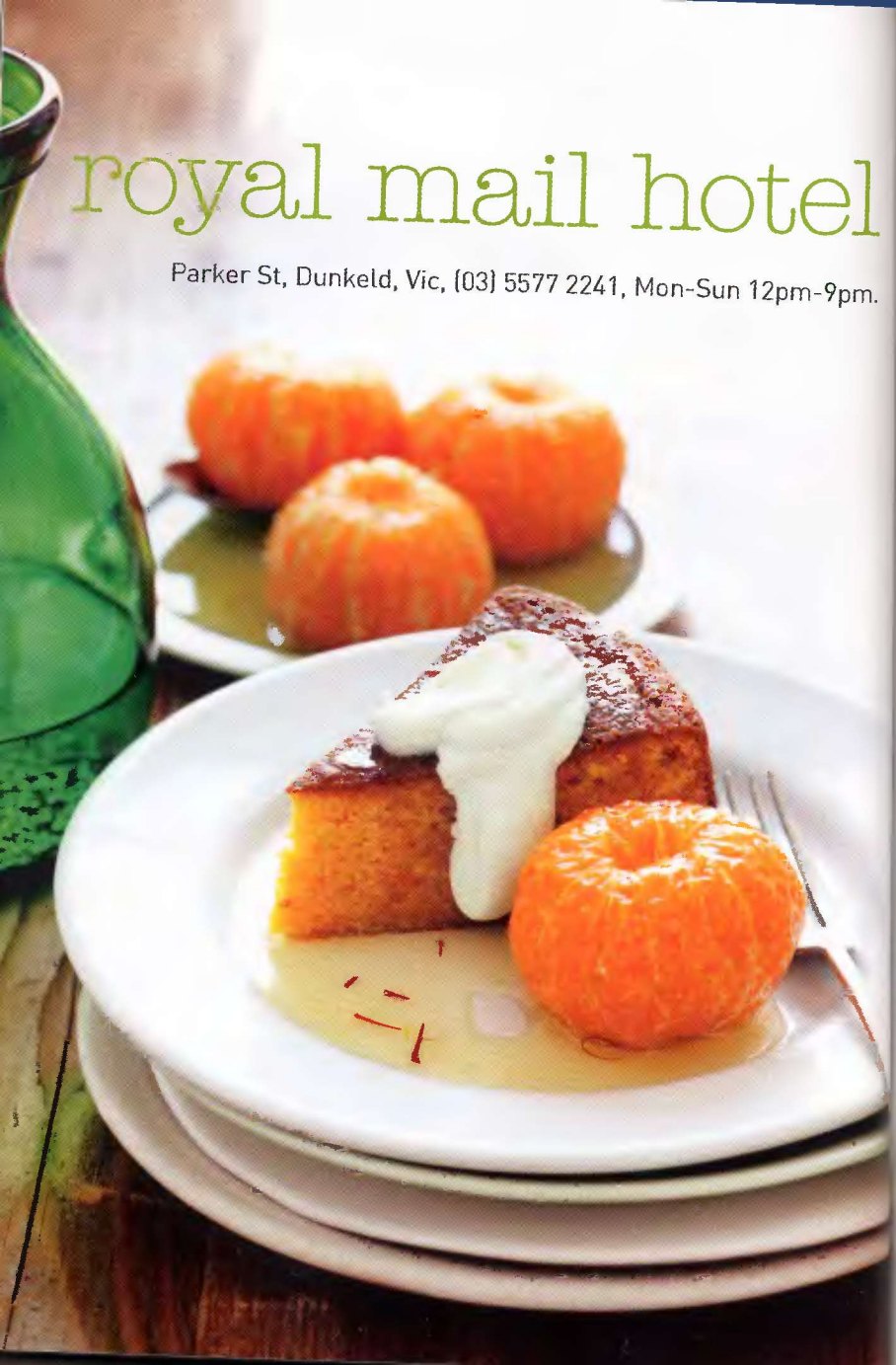
Pour the peanut oil into a hot wok over high heat. Crack 1 egg into a bowl and pour into the smoking wok. Cook for 30 seconds, then flip and cook for a further 15 seconds or until golden. Drain the egg on paper towel and repeat with remaining eggs.

Place a lettuce leaf on each plate and top with an egg. Scatter over bean sprouts, onion, chilli, herbs and shallots. Drizzle with the fish sauce and serve with lime.

* Available from Asian food shops and selected supermarkets.

royal mail hotel

Parker St, Dunkeld, Vic, (03) 5577 2241, Mon-Sun 12pm-9pm.



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The swanky dining room at Dunkeld's Royal Mail Hotel may have garnered all the praise and awards as Australia's best regional restaurant this year, but in the cafe, chef Dan Hunter turns to some of the other culinary ideas he picked up from his time in Spain. Out in the hotel's courtyard, with its stunning views of the Southern Grampians, there's a relaxed lunch and dinner menu that continues to concentrate on Hunter's obsession with regional cuisine but is also peppered with classics from the Iberian peninsula. Take your pick from little plates of braised octopus, spinach empanadillas with citrus salad or baked sea bream with spiced onion and capers. For desserts, look to the wonderful cold summer rice pudding spiked with cinnamon and a little lemon peel, or this delicious saffron mandarin cake, which represents another classic pairing of Moorish flavours. **d.**

saffron & mandarin cake with sticky mandarins

Serves 6

3 mandarins (unpeeled)
1 large pinch saffron threads
3 eggs
250g caster sugar
75g plain flour, sifted
1 2/3 cups (200g) almond meal
2 tsp baking powder
Thick cream, to serve

Sticky mandarins

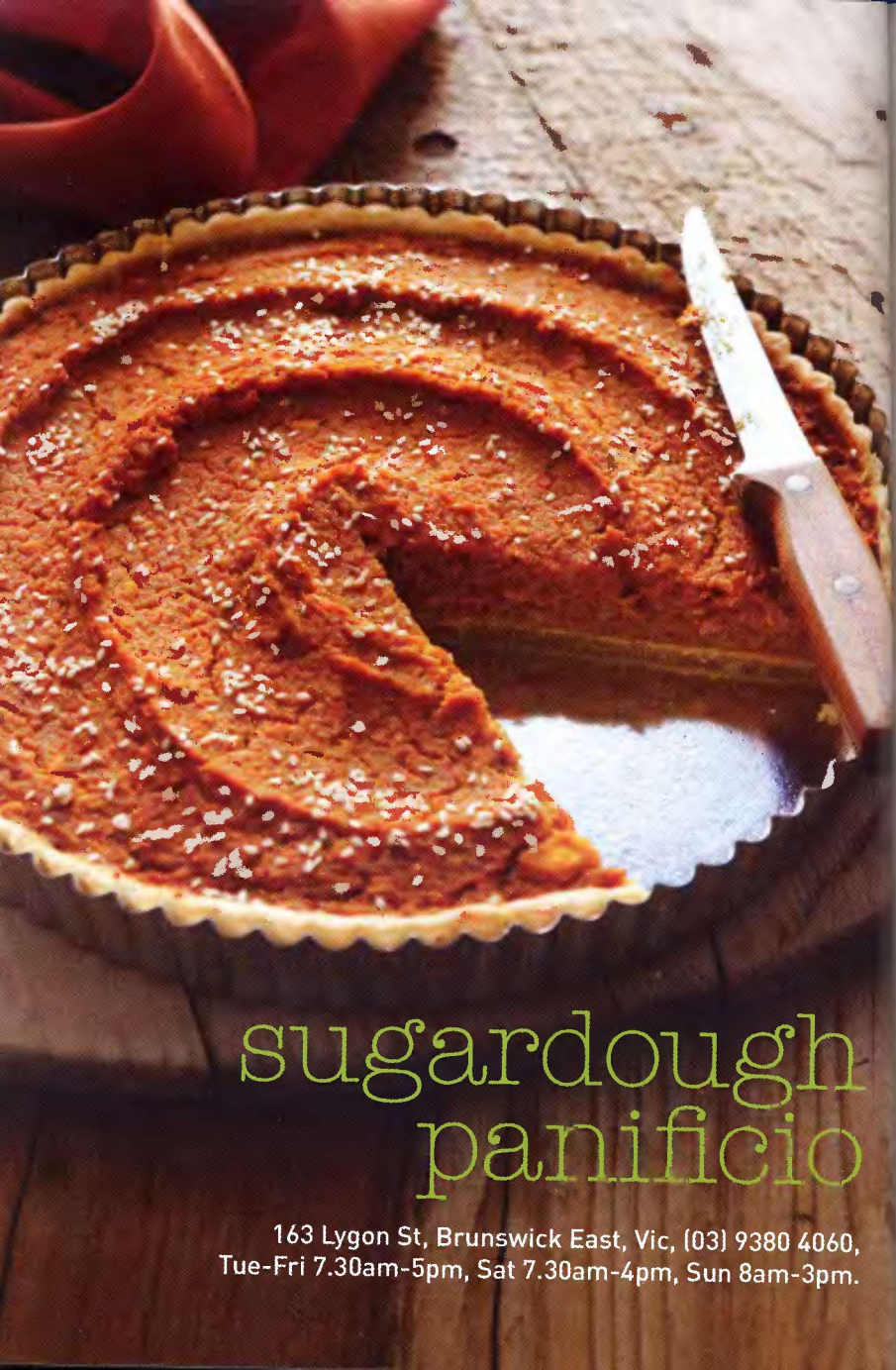
750g caster sugar
Pared rind of 1 mandarin, lime and lemon
Small pinch of saffron threads
6 small mandarins, peeled

Heat oven to 170°C. Line a 20cm cake pan with baking paper. Place mandarins in a pan and cover with water. Bring to boil, then reduce heat to medium and simmer for 40 minutes until soft. Halve, remove seeds, then blend to a puree with saffron.

Use an electric beater to whisk eggs and sugar until pale. Fold in flour, almond meal, baking powder and puree. Pour into prepared pan and bake for 45-50 minutes until golden and a skewer inserted comes out clean. Cool in pan, then turn out.

Meanwhile, for the mandarins, combine sugar, 1 1/2 cups (375ml) water, rind and saffron in a pan over medium heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Simmer for 10 minutes, brushing down sides with a wet brush, until sticky and reduced. Strain and discard rind. Add mandarins to syrup, then allow to cool.

Serve cake with mandarins and cream.



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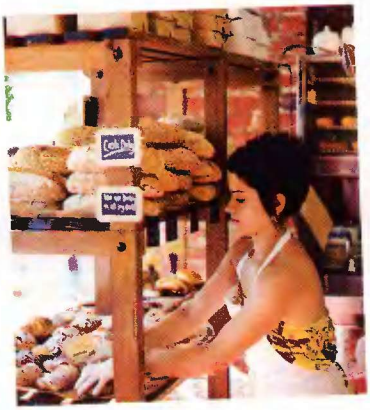
Famous for the Italian hot chocolate that's thick enough to be sold as a warm mousse, and bomboloni (those Italian doughnuts filled with custard, apricot, plum or chocolate that are made to a recipe handed down from the original Italian *pasticceria* once here), Orlando Artavilla and Toula Plounidis's bakery/cafe has built up a great rep for its cakes and pastries. Yet when you come to eat in this cosy, bustling little spot, you'll almost undoubtedly raid their excellent collection of savoury tarts from the counter; whether topped with the pungent, earthy combination of silverbeet and Taleggio cheese, potato, rosemary and goat's cheese, or the pumpkin version featured here. **d.**



malaysian pumpkin pie

Serves 10-12

1½ tbs sunflower oil
2 large onions (about 400g), chopped
2 tsp cumin seeds
2½ tbs curry powder
2½ tsp sweet paprika
1½ tsp ground turmeric
100ml pure (thin) cream
450g block shortcrust pastry*
1kg jap pumpkin, peeled, chopped into 3cm pieces
3 carrots, peeled, chopped into 1cm pieces
200g fresh breadcrumbs
1 egg
Sesame seeds, to sprinkle

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Heat the oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cumin and cook, stirring, for 6-8 minutes until the onion is softened. Reduce the heat to low, then add the curry powder, paprika and turmeric and cook, stirring, for a further 5 minutes. Pour in cream and 2 cups (500ml) water. Bring to the boil, then simmer over medium heat for 4 minutes or until slightly thickened.

Roll out pastry to 3-4mm thick and use to line a 32cm loose-bottomed tart pan. Trim edges. Prick base with a fork. Chill.

Meanwhile, toss vegetables in a baking dish with the curry mixture. Bake for 30 minutes until tender. Blend in a processor until smooth. Stir in breadcrumbs and egg.

Line the pastry base with baking paper and pastry weights or uncooked rice. Blind-bake for 10-15 minutes until golden. Remove paper and weights, then bake for a further 5 minutes until dry. Reduce oven to 180°C. Spread pumpkin mixture into tart pan and sprinkle over sesame seeds. Bake for 55 minutes or until golden and set.

* We used Carême. Visit: caremepastry.com.

made

60 Pin Oak Cres, Flemington, Vic. (03) 9372 6429,
Tue-Fri 7am-4pm, Sat-Sun 8am-4pm.

We've fallen a little bit in love with this tiny cafe on the wrong side of the tracks in Flemington. Its view might be of the railway embankment, but the welcome from young couple Gabriel Espinoza and Margaret Azzopardi is unfailingly warm. The food is a zippy combination of Hispanic ideas that are beautifully executed, cafe-style. Think little pans of baked potato tortilla shot with green olive and saffron strands or *huevos rojos* – eggs with a capsicum and tomato chilli sauce. Another breakfast favourite is this rice pudding, which Gabriel remembers bubbling away on the stove back in Chile before the family moved to Australia when he was six. **d.**

arroz con leche

Serves 6

250g calasparra rice*
1L (4 cups) milk
250g caster sugar
3 cloves
1 cinnamon quill
1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
Pared rind of 1 lemon
Stewed fruits or fresh berries, to serve

Boil the rice in a saucepan of water for 5 minutes. Drain and set aside.

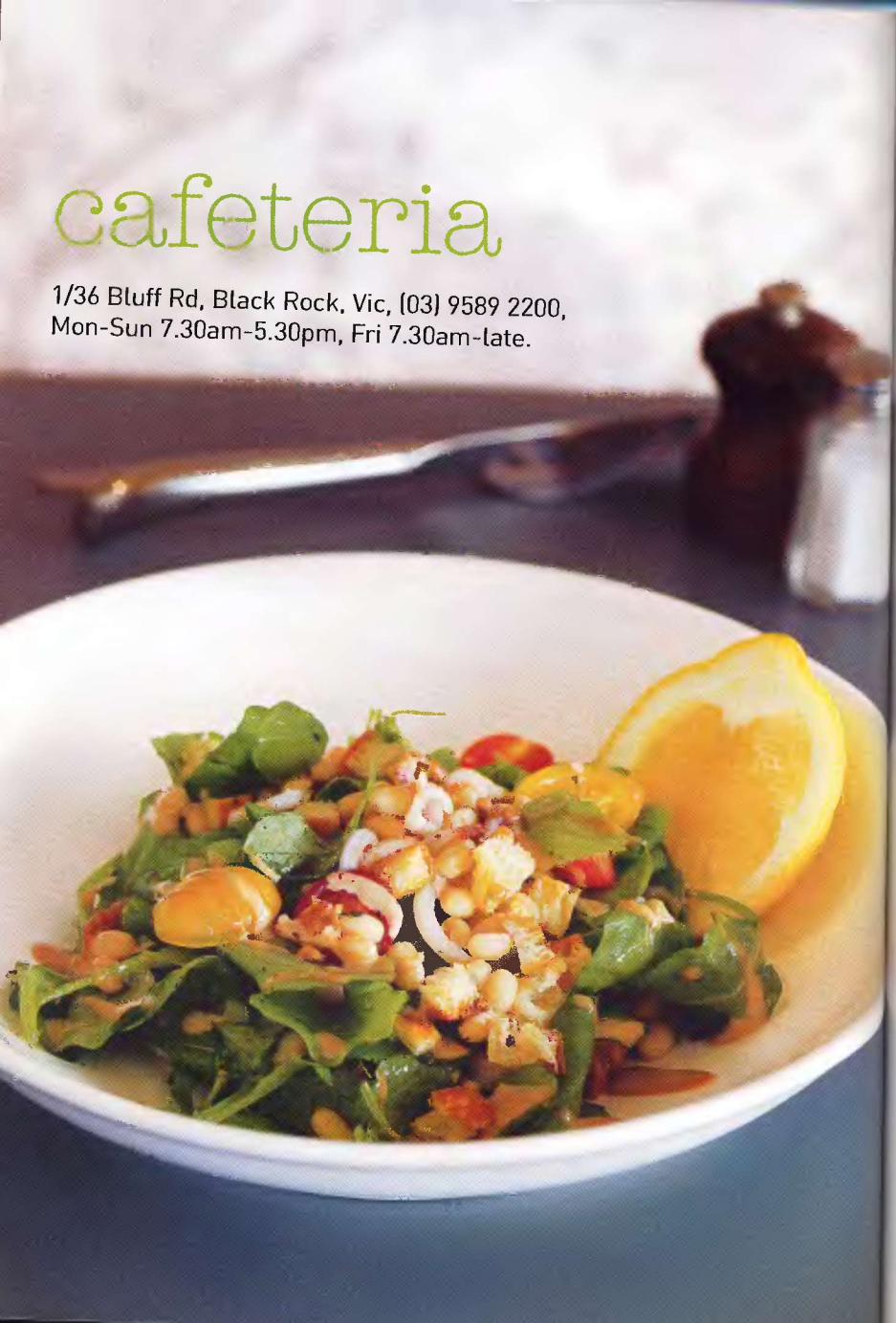
Meanwhile, heat milk in a saucepan over medium heat with sugar, cloves, cinnamon, vanilla pod and seeds and lemon rind. Stir frequently for 1-2 minutes until the sugar is dissolved and milk is infused with aromatics (don't allow to boil).

Add the rice to the hot milk mixture and simmer, stirring occasionally, over medium heat for 20-25 minutes or until the rice is cooked and milk is absorbed. Spread mixture into a shallow tray to cool. Remove cloves, cinnamon, vanilla pod and lemon rind. Serve rice hot or cold with stewed fruits or fresh berries.

* Calasparra rice is available from Spanish delis and gourmet food shops. Substitute short-grain or arborio rice.

cafeteria

1/36 Bluff Rd, Black Rock, Vic, (03) 9589 2200,
Mon-Sun 7.30am-5.30pm, Fri 7.30am-late.



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After a career working in high-profile restaurants like The Ivy in London, The Loose Box in Perth and Lynch's in Melbourne, Irish-born chef Eugene Lavery opted for a sea change, opening this cafe in the relaxed Melbourne bayside suburb of Black Rock. His idea behind Cafeteria was to create somewhere he would eat. "I'm very conscious of cafe clichés, so our menu is a little more grown-up than focaccia and wedges." Expect choices such as new season asparagus with linguine and goat's curd, or potato rosti with smoked salmon, spinach and poached egg. Eugene also does dinner on Fridays – it's a chance to keep his hand in and show that a cafe can do more than just eggs four ways. **d.**

pan-seared calamari with bean and tomato salad and balsamic mayonnaise

Serves 4

4 slices ciabatta or woodfired bread, crusts removed, cut into 1cm cubes
100ml olive oil
500g squid tubes, cleaned, cut into rings
Juice of 1/2 lemon, plus lemon wedges to serve
100g rocket leaves
400g can cannellini beans, drained, rinsed
250g mixed cherry tomatoes (such as grape and yellow pear), halved

Balsamic mayonnaise
200ml balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 tbs honey
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1/2 cup (150g) mayonnaise

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Toss bread with 1/4 cup (60ml) oil on a baking tray. Spread in a single layer and bake for 4-6 minutes until crisp and golden. Cool, then season lightly with salt.

For the balsamic mayonnaise, place the vinegar, honey and garlic in a pan over medium-high heat and cook, stirring, for 1-2 minutes until honey dissolves. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes until thick, syrupy and reduced by one-third. Cool slightly, then stir in mayonnaise. Taste and add more mayonnaise or vinegar if required. The consistency should be runny; if it's too thick, whisk in 1 tablespoon hot water.

Heat the remaining oil in a frypan over medium-high heat. Season the squid and cook, turning once, for 2 minutes or until just cooked. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice. Toss in a bowl with rocket, beans, tomato and croutons. Season, then serve with mayonnaise and lemon wedges.

tarts

212 Lake St, Northbridge, WA, (08) 9328 6607, Mon-Sun 7am-6pm.

Sweet or savoury, it's available at Tarts, but there's much more on offer here than just pastry-hugged treats. In a converted house, complete with front and back garden seating areas and away from the hustle and bustle of Northbridge's main drag, husband-and-wife team John and Sandra Vallini have created the sort of place where you can enjoy a relaxed "belly-full" breakfast or a steak sandwich for lunch. The store section of Tarts contains the usual condiments and preserves, but also stocks a range of other products including jewellery, scarves, clothes, bags and even plants, so while you may have gone in for one of their freshly made muffins, you could find yourself leaving with a new frock. **d.**

mixed berry & white chocolate muffins

Makes 6

Tarts also make this muffin in other varieties, such as banana and choc chip, or peach and white chocolate.

2 1/2 cups (375g) self-raising flour
1 cup (220g) caster sugar
1/2 cup (90g) white chocolate drops
2 eggs
2 tbs sunflower oil
1/2 cup (140g) natural yoghurt
3/4 cup (185ml) milk
1/2 cup fresh or frozen mixed berries

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line a 6-hole 200ml-capacity Texas muffin pan with paper cases.

Mix the flour, sugar and chocolate together in a bowl.

In a separate bowl, mix the eggs, oil, yoghurt and milk together. Fold the wet ingredients into the flour mixture until just combined, taking care sure not to over-mix (add more milk if the mixture is a little dry). Fold in the mixed berries.

Spoon the mixture evenly into the muffin pan, then bake for 25-30 minutes until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Allow the muffins to cool in the pan for 5-10 minutes, then turn out. Serve the muffins warm.

crostini with hot-smoked salmon and truffled honey dressing

Serves 4

At Soda Cafe, they hot-smoke their own salmon using jasmine tea leaves.

1/3 red onion, thinly shaved into rings
1 tbs salted capers, rinsed, drained
1 cup picked watercress sprigs
2 x 175g hot-smoked salmon portions*
100g goat's curd
1 baguette, thinly sliced on angle, brushed with oil, toasted

Truffled honey dressing

1 tbs mustard seeds, toasted
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tbs truffled honey*
Juice of 1 lemon
1/2 cup (125ml) extra virgin olive oil

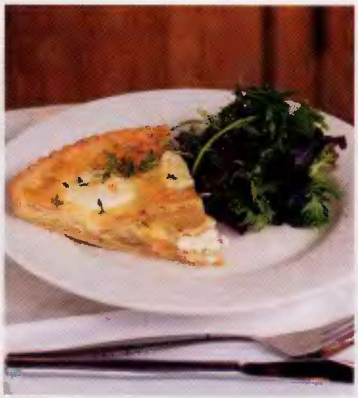
For the honey dressing, whisk all of the ingredients together in a bowl with 1/2 teaspoon sea salt. Set aside.

Place onion, capers, watercress and some salt and pepper in a bowl. Flake the salmon into the bowl, then pour in a little dressing and gently toss to combine.

To serve, drizzle a little dressing over each plate, then layer with the salad, spoonfuls of goat's curd and the baguette.

* Hot-smoked salmon is available from supermarkets. Truffled honey is available from gourmet food shops and delis.

From humble beginnings baking out of a monastery's 19th-century oven, the renowned Perth breadmakers New Norcia Bakeries have gone from strength to strength. It's therefore not surprising that when Kingsley and Chrissie Sullivan, along with partner Mark Young, looked to expand their Mount Hawthorn outlet in 2000, they caved in to customer demands for a place to sip coffee while enjoying the bakery's wares. Score a chair in the 30-seat cafe (if you're lucky), and breathe in the heady aroma as breads, croissants, pastries and pies come out of the ovens. Popular menu items include their sourdough croque monsieur with housemade bechamel, and the tangy yet sweet goat's cheese and caramelised onion tart. **d.**



goat's cheese & caramelised onion tart

Serves 4-6

1/4 cup (60ml) olive oil
2 onions, chopped
Pinch of grated nutmeg
1 sheet shortcrust pastry
3 eggs
1/2 cup creme fraiche or pure (thin) cream
160g goat's cheese, thinly sliced
3 thyme sprigs, leaves picked

Heat oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes until it starts to soften. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook gently for 45-50 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onion is soft and caramelised, but not browned. Season with nutmeg, salt and pepper. Remove from the heat, drain any excess oil and allow to cool.

Meanwhile, heat oven to 200°C. Grease a 23cm loose-bottomed tart pan, then line with pastry. Prick base with a fork. Line with baking paper and baking weights, then blind-bake for 10 minutes. Remove baking weights and paper and continue to cook for a further 5 minutes or until golden. Allow to cool slightly. Reduce the oven temperature to 180°C.

Whisk eggs and creme fraiche together. Season. Scatter onion over tart base, top with cheese, pour egg mixture over and sprinkle with thyme. Bake for 20 minutes until egg is set and pastry is golden. Serve warm or at room temperature with salad.

beess & co.

5/29 Bentham St, Yarralumla, ACT, (02) 6285 0116, Mon-Sat 7am-5pm.

When former flatmates Katherine Mitchell and Andrea Beess und Chrostin decided to open a cafe, they looked no further than their own suburb of Yarralumla. Activity from the nearby lake means that on weekends you'll have to fight cyclists, rowers and dog walkers for a spot outside under the London Plane trees. Sample the housemade jams and cakes, including an Austrian sour cherry chocolate cake made to Andrea's mother-in-law's recipe. Further delights include the Spanish omelettes, a crispy duck and soba noodle salad, and this honey-toasted muesli. **d.**

honey-toasted muesli

Makes about 8 cups (serves 6-8)

2 cups (200g) honey-toasted oats*
1 1/3 cups puffed millet*
1 1/3 cups wheat flakes
1/3 cup All-Bran (or other bran straws)
1/3 cup raw buckwheat*
1/4 cup pepitas, lightly toasted
1/4 cup sunflower seeds, lightly toasted
1/4 cup sesame seeds, lightly toasted
1/4 cup linseed*
1/4 cup shredded coconut
1/4 cup flaked almonds, lightly toasted
1/4 cup each chopped pecans and walnuts
1/4 cup raisins (preferably unsulphured)
1/4 cup currants (preferably unsulphured)
1/4 cup sultanas (preferably unsulphured)
1/4 cup chopped dried apricots (preferably unsulphured)
1/4 cup chopped dried mango
1/4 cup chopped dried pitted dates
1/4 cup chopped dried apple (preferably unsulphured)
Fresh fruit, yoghurt, honey, milk and icing sugar, to serve

Mix all dry ingredients. Serve muesli topped with fruit and yoghurt and dusted with icing sugar. with honey and milk.
* Available from health food shops and selected supermarkets.

torta della nonna

Serves 4

2 cups (300g) plain flour
1/4 cup (60ml) olive oil
1 egg, lightly beaten
Thyme leaves, to garnish (optional)
Mixed green salad, to serve

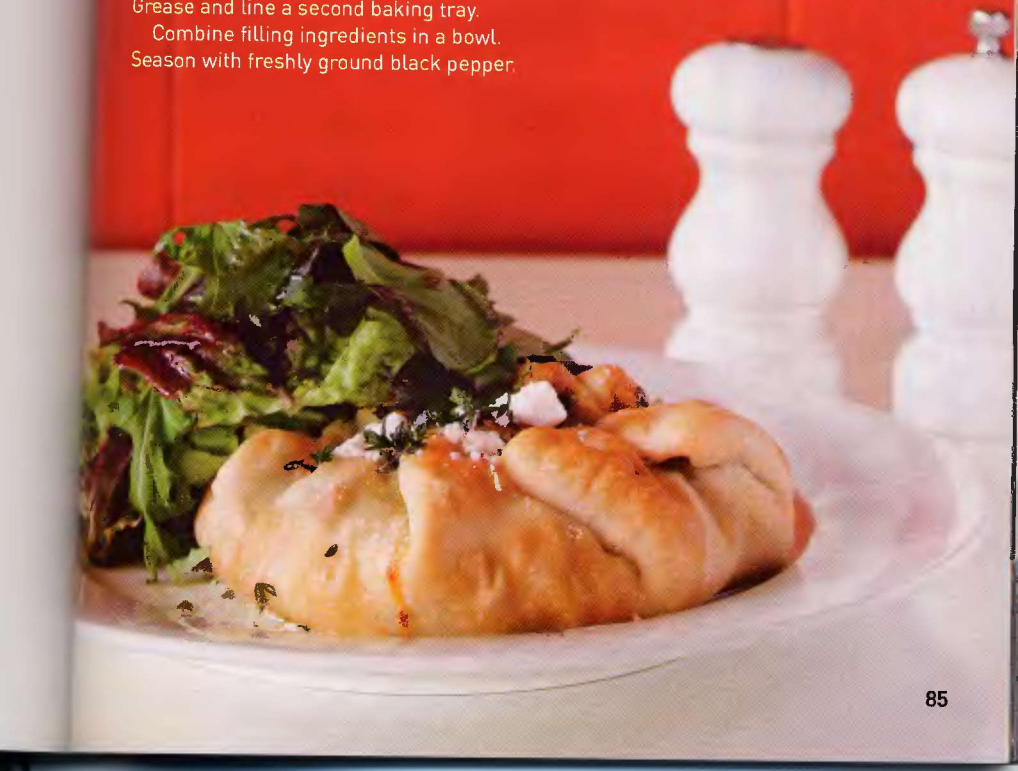
Filling
180g baby spinach, coarsely chopped
4 eggs, lightly beaten
300g feta, crumbled, plus extra to serve
1 1/4 cups (100g) grated parmesan
1 large apple (with skin on), grated

Preheat oven to 200°C. Place a baking tray on the middle shelf of the oven. Grease and line a second baking tray.

Combine filling ingredients in a bowl. Season with freshly ground black pepper.

Sift flour into a separate bowl and make a well in the centre. Pour in oil along with 3/4 cup (185ml) water and, using a wooden spoon, mix until a dough starts to form. (You may need to add more flour or water – you want an elastic dough that is similar to a pizza dough.) Turn out onto a floured board and knead for 1 minute. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces.

Roll out 1 piece of dough to a 2mm-thick disc (about 25cm round). Place one-quarter of the filling in centre of disc, brush edges with egg, then gather edges to cover filling, folding to seal. Place on the lined baking tray. Repeat to form 4 parcels. Brush with egg. Place tray on preheated tray and bake for 25-30 minutes until golden. Garnish with thyme and feta, then serve with salad.



deeks bakery & cafe

Pearce Shops, Hodgson Cr, Pearce, ACT,
(02) 6286 9444, Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm,
Sat 8.30am-3pm.

Gluten-free, grain-free and high protein is the motto behind this bakery/cafe, which is owned by sporting great Robert de Castella, wife Theresa and partner Bill Giles. Using a special mix of tapioca, soy and quinoa (which they grind using an old-fashioned stone mill), Deeks turns out fantastic pumpkin, fruit and farmhouse-style loaves for the allergy-sensitive, with many of its products carrying a dairy-free tag, too. Pick up a coeliac-friendly pizza base to enjoy at home, or make your way to the courtyard out back and tuck into a pasta. And those with a sweet-tooth aren't excluded, with choices like these decadent chocolate brownies. **d.**

chocolate brownies

Makes 12-16

3 eggs
250g caster sugar
70g unsalted butter
175g dark cooking chocolate, chopped
90g quinoa flour*
1/2 cup (85g) tapioca flour*
30g soy flour*
1/4 cup (25g) buckwheat flour*
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/3 cup (35g) cocoa powder
1 tsp guar gum*
1/4 cup walnut crumbs, plus extra crumbs and whole walnuts, to garnish
70g light sour cream
1 tbs almond meal

Milk chocolate ganache
1/3 cup (80ml) thickened cream
125g milk chocolate drops

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease and line a 20cm x 30cm cake pan.

Beat eggs and sugar with electric beaters until thick and pale. Place butter and chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water (don't let bowl touch water) until melted. Stir into the egg mixture. Sift the flours into a bowl. Stir in chocolate mixture and all the remaining ingredients. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 35-40 minutes until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Allow to cool in the pan, then turn out.

For the ganache, place cream in a pan over medium-high heat and bring to just below boiling point. Add chocolate, then remove from heat and stir until melted and combined. Allow to cool slightly, then spread over the brownies. Garnish with extra nuts, then chill until ganache sets. Cut into 12-16 squares, then serve.

* Available from health food shops.

milk and honey

29 Garema Pl, Canberra, ACT, (02) 6247 7722,
Mon-Fri 7.30am-late, Sat 8am-late, Sun 9am-5pm.

In the heart of Canberra's retail and entertainment district, Milk and Honey delivers simple fare with a slick approach. The fit-out has a slightly retro feel – muted oranges and lime-greens tempered by chocolate ottomans and latte banquettes. The food is far more modern – think garlic prawns with feta and lemon. The weekly-changing wine list also provides a point of interest, with bottles to suit every budget, or head in post-movie to indulge in one of co-owner Miriana Cavic's cheesecakes in flavours such as cherry and mascarpone. **d.**

garlic prawns with feta and lemon

Serves 4

1/4 cup (60ml) olive oil
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1/2 cup (125ml) dry white wine
Juice of 1 lemon
20 green prawns, peeled (tails intact) deveined
200g Greek-style feta, crumbled
1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
Turkish bread loaf, thinly sliced, toasted
1 cup mesclun (baby salad leaves)

Place the olive oil and garlic in a frypan over medium-high heat and cook for 1 minute, stirring frequently, until the garlic is slightly golden.

Add the white wine and lemon juice, then bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes or until the wine and juice have evaporated. Add the prawns and cook, stirring, for 4 minutes or until the prawns are cooked through. Toss in the feta and parsley, then remove from the heat.

Divide the toasted Turkish bread slices among 4 serving plates, then top with the warm prawns and the salad leaves. Serve immediately.

bar espresso

76 Mitchell St, Darwin, NT, (08) 8942 2122, Mon-Sun 7am-10pm.

Bar Espresso is a dangerous place for those prone to indecision. Every day, the display counters groan under a load of elaborate cakes, freshly made custard slices, rich brownies, plate-sized biscuits, tarts, pies and other sweet and savoury treats. Award-winning Swiss pastry chef Kurt Bucher, who runs Kurt's Cakes out the back, is the man responsible for the tempting display. Bar Espresso makes some of the best coffee in town, and those who pop in for an espresso to kick-start the day can watch Kurt and his team at work through the glass window at the rear of this stylish cafe. **d.**

big anzac biscuits

Makes 10

2 tsp bicarbonate soda
1 1/4 cups (110g) rolled oats
190g plain flour, sifted
1 cup (220g) caster sugar
1 cup (90g) desiccated coconut
1 tbs golden syrup
190g unsalted butter, melted

Preheat oven to 190°C. Grease 2-3 large baking trays (or bake biscuits in batches).

Combine the bicarbonate soda with 2 tablespoons boiling water in a large bowl. Add all the remaining ingredients and stir until well combined.

Divide mixture into 10 equal portions. Place 2-3 portions of dough onto each baking tray and flatten to 8cm diameter, leaving space for the biscuits to spread as they cook (the biscuits will be about 15cm across when cooled).

Bake for 12-15 minutes until golden brown. Remove from oven and transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Store the Anzac biscuits in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

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